

THE ROMANCE OF
THE COMMONPLACE
BY GELETT BURGESS





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THE ROMANCE OF THE
COMMONPLACE

THE ROMANCE OF THE COMMONPLACE

By

GELETT BURGESS ✓

AUTHOR OF THE WHITE CAT, THE HEART LINE,
LOVE IN A HURRY, ETC.

Now things there are that, upon him who sees,
A strong vocation lay; and strains there are
That whoso bears shall bear for evermore.

—*Robert Louis Stevenson.*

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BOOKBINDERS AND PRINTERS
BROOKLYN, N. Y.

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FEB 24 1916 ✓

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no 2 ✓

TO
MY SISTERS, ELLA AND ANNE:
WITH WHOM
THIS PHILOSOPHY WAS PROVEN

PREFACE

Of course you have heard of that faithful widow who, in her old age, visited the glacier to find the body of her husband, fallen into a crevasse during their honeymoon.

So it seems now to publish, after sixteen years, the careless chattering of my youth. And as she marveled at the change, so do I. To her, poor soul, the alteration was in that half-forgotten, idealized youthful mate—but I have no such illusion. Well I know the change is in myself.

So, how innocent, how irresponsible do these slight essays now appear! And yet I can not redress them in the sophisticated diction of my prime. They must wear the frivolous costume in which they first went forth, or lose all their character. As well might one try to rewrite a love-letter when one's passion has cooled.

For those wherein I have prosecuted my main thesis I have less desire to apologize. Their enthusiasm will, I hope, atone for their superficiality. And, too, even in middle age I see no great flaw in their optimistic reasoning, such as it is, for to view life romantically I have found the surest cure for cynicism and ennui.

The later essays may be regarded as diversions from the main theme, practical applications of my theorem,

laboratory experiments in the principle. They may be judged as the pragmatic tests of my philosophy—if so slight a reasoning may be called by so pedantic a term.

Here I have ranged perhaps too far afield and strayed at times from the subject. But the same mood, I think, inspires them. There are numberless ways in which the thesis might be illustrated, and I have but chosen a few, hit or miss.

For the matter itself, then, I have few qualms, as I sought but to suggest, not to convince. It is the manner of my expression that I most regret. Such smooth legato movement is not at all to the present tempo of my literary mood, and this, even though to preserve consistency, I adopt at present, an earlier style.

This is the pathos of the writer's profession—that his first work has more of life and his latest more of art. For matter he must gradually substitute manner. His first thoughts are ambitious and unrestrained, and growth of skill seems almost inevitably to preclude spontaneity. Indeed, in the realm of literature one might almost transpose the old plaint and say: "*Si la jeunesse pouvait, si la vieillesse savait!*" Youth believes and dares, age has technique but lacks enthusiasm. How age could create, if age were youth!

So now I might rewrite, enlarge, polish and perfect, make my style modern and vivid—but something would be awry. My slender boyish dreams would never stand the strain.

And so, I do but revisit the glacier and show you the vision of my youth. If it seem callow and quaintly clad, none the less was it lusty, and its song to my older ears still rings true. And perhaps, though middle age may smile to-day at its obvious harmonies, some youngster may smile, too, to find the melody awakening a responsive thrill.

G. B.

INTRODUCTION

To let this book go from my hands without some one more personal note than the didactic paragraphs of these essays contained, has been, I must confess, a temptation too strong for me to resist. The observing reader will note that I have so rewritten my theses that none of them begins with an "I" in big type, and though this preliminary chapter conforms to the rule also, it is for typographic rather than for any more modest reasons. Frankly, this page is by way of a flourish to my signature, and is the very impertinence of vanity.

But this little course of philosophy lays my character and temperament, not to speak of my intellect, so bare that, finished and summed up for the printer, I am all of a shiver with shame. My nonsense gave, I conceit myself, no clue by which my real self might be discovered. My fiction I have been held somewhat responsible for, but escape for the story-teller is always easy. Even in poetry a man may so cloak himself in metaphor that he may hope to be well enough disguised. But the essay is the most compromising form of literature possible, and even such filmy confidences and trivial gaieties as these write me down for what I am. Were they even critical in character,

I would have that best of excuses, a difference of taste, but here I have had the audacity to attempt a discussion of life itself, upon which every reader will believe himself to be a competent critic.

By a queer sequence of circumstances, the essays, begun in the *Lark*, were continued in the *Queen*, and, if you have read these two papers, you will know that one magazine is as remote in character from the other as San Francisco is from London. But each has happened to fare far afield in search of readers, and between them I may have converted some few to my optimistic view of every-day incident. To educate the British Matron and Young Person was, perhaps, no more difficult an undertaking than to open the eyes of the California Native Son. The fogs that fall over the Thames are not very different to the mists that drive in through the Golden Gate, after all!

Still, I would not have you think that these lessons were written with my tongue in my cheek. I have made believe so long that now I am quite sincere in my conviction that we can see pretty much whatever we look for; which should prove the desirability of searching for amusement and profit rather than for boredom and disillusion.

We are in the day of homespun philosophy and hand-made dogma. A kind of mental atavism has made science preposterous; modern astrologers and palmists put old wine into new bottles, and the discus-

sion of Psychomachy bids fair to revolutionize the Eternal Feminine. And so I, too, strike my attitude and apostrophize the Universe. As being, in part, a wholesome reaction from the prevailing cult, I might call my doctrine Pagan Science, for the type of my proselyte is the Bornese war chief peripatetic on Broadway—the amused wonderer. But I shall not begin all my nouns with capitals, for it is my aim to write of romance with a small “r.” Also my philosophy must not be thought a mere *laissez faire*; it is an active, not a passive, creed. We are here not to be entertained, but to entertain ourselves.

I might have called this book *A Guide Through Middle Age*, for it is then that one needs enthusiasm the most. We stagger gaily through Youth, and by the time Old Age has come we have usually found a practicable working philosophy, but at forty one is likely to have a bitter hour at times, especially if one is still single. Or, so they tell me; I shall never confess to that status, and shall leap boldly into a white beard. A kindly euphemism calls this horrid, half-way stage one’s Prime. I have here endeavored to justify the usage, though I am opposed by a thousand poets.

If some of these essays seem but vaguely correlated to my major theme, you must think of them as being mere illustrations or practical solutions of the commonplace, solved by means of the theory I have de-

veloped and iterated. It was hard, indeed, to know when to stop, but, ragged as are my hints, I hope that in all essentials I have covered the ground and formulated the main rules of the Game of Living. One does not even have to be an expert to be able to do that!

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THE ROMANCE OF THE
COMMONPLACE

PART I

The Romance of the Commonplace

THE ROMANCE *of the* COMMONPLACE

APRIL ESSAYS

THEY were begun in the April of my life, and though it is now well into mid-June, some of the glamour of the Spring yet inspires me, and I am still a-wondering. I have tried every charm to preserve my youth, and a drop of wine and a girl or two into the bargain, but the game is near played out.

But what boots marbles and tops when one is initiated into the mysteries of billiards and chess? It has taken me all these years to find that there is sport for every season, and the rules vary. To make a bold play at life, then, without cheating (which is due only to a false conception of the reward), and with the progress, rather than the particular stage reached, in mind, is my aim. So I have tossed overboard all my fears and regrets, and gone in for the higher problems of maturity.

Still, a few of the maxims I drew from my joys and sorrows in the few calmer moments of reverie persist; and these all strengthen me in the romantic view of life. A man must take his work or his art seriously, and pursue it with a single intent; he must fix on the realities first of all, but there is room for imagination as well, and with this I have savored my duties, as one puts sauce to pudding. Enough has been written on the earnestness of motive, of sobriety and all the catalogue of virtues usually dignified with capital initials. I own allegiance to an empire beside all that—another Forest of Arden—the tinkle of whose laughter is a permanent sustained accompaniment to the more significant notes of man's sober industries.

Must I be dubbed trifler then, because I make a game of life? Every man of spirit and imagination must, I think, be a true sportsman. It is in the blood of genius to love play for its own sake, and whether one uses one's skill on thrones or women, swords or pens, gold or fame, the game's the thing! Surely, it is not only the reward that makes it worth while, it is the problem—the study of each step on the way, the disentangling of the knotted cord of fate, the sequence and climax of move after move, the logical grasp of what is to come upon the chess-board. As it is in the

great, then, may it not be in the small? To one of fancy and poetic vision, mere size is an accident, a personal element, a relative, not an absolute quality of things. The microscope reveals wonders to the scientist, as great and as important as does the telescope. The leaf is as complex as the forest. To the poet, "a primrose by the river's brim" has the beauty of the Infinite. And so nothing is commonplace, or to be taken for granted. One needs only the fresh eye, the eagerness of interest, and this Universe of workaday things which, with the animals, we get "for a penny, plain," may be colored with the twopence worth of mind by which we are richer than they.

We have all passed through that phase of art-appreciation in which familiar objects are endowed with an extrinsic esthetic value. The realist discovers a new sensation in a heap of refuse, the impressionist in the purple shadows of the hills. In weaker intellects the craving for this dignifying of the obvious leads to the gilding of the rolling-pin or the decalcomanie decoration of the bean-pot. With something of each of these methods, I would practise on every-day affairs, and make them picturesque.

This is, perhaps, a characteristically Oriental point of view of life. Undoubtedly it is the Japanese pose,

and it is well illustrated in their art. What, by Korin, would be thought too insignificant for portrayal? He had but to separate an object, or a group of objects, from its environment and he beheld a design, with line, mass, color and *notan*. Art was to him not a question of subject, but of composition. He held his frame before a tiny fragment of the visible world, any fragment, indeed, and, placing that in its true position, not in regard to its surroundings, but in regard to the frame, it became a pattern. May we not, for our diversion, do thus with Life? If we hold up our frame, disregarding the accidental shadows of tradition and establishment, we may see bits of a new world.

It is thus that the man from Mars would view our life and manners. Unsophisticated, he would hold his frame in front of a man, and, cutting him off from his family, his neighbors, his position in Society, he would see a personage as real and as individual as "the Man with the Glove," or "the Unknown Woman" is to us. He would bring an uncorrupted eye and see strange pictures in the facts of our jaded routine. In accustomed meetings and actions he would see hidden possibilities and secret charms. He would witness this drab life of ours as a bewilderingly endless romance. Nothing would be presupposed, nothing foreseen, and

each turn of the kaleidoscope would exhibit another of the infinitely various permutations of human relationship.

Such is the philosophy of youth. It denies the conventional postulates of the Philistine. It will not accept the axioms of the unimaginative—two and two may prove to make five; upon due investigation, seemingly parallel cases may widely diverge, and the greater may not always include the less, in this non-Euclidean Geometry of Life. It transmutes the prose of living into the poetry of idealization, as love transmutes the physical fact of osculation into the beatitude of a kiss. Of well-known occurrences it makes mysteries and it turns accepted marvels into simple truths, comprehensible and self-evident.

Culture refines and analyzes. It seeks the invisible rays of the spectrum and delights in overtones, subtle vibrations and delicate nuances of thought. So this neglected philosophy of enthusiasm also gleans the neglected and forgotten mysteries of humanity. Its virtue is in its economy; it wrings the last drop of sensation from experience. Like modern processes of manufacture it produces good from what was considered but waste and tailings. By a positive contribution to happiness it refutes the charge of trifling, for in the prac-

tise of this art one does but pick up what has been thrown away. All's fish that comes to its net.

And so, I set out to discover for myself what was most sanely enjoyable—what would last without fading or rusting—what gold, in short, life had hidden in its gravel.

But it is more than a science; it has more than an economic value for happiness—it is a religion. The creed of hope bids one wonder and hope and rejoice, it teaches us to listen for the whispered voice, to see the spirit instead of the body of the facts of life. But it does more; it is illuminating, and reveals a new conception of beauty.

There is an apocryphal legend of the Christ that tells how He with His disciples were passing along a road, when they came upon the body of a dead dog. Those with Him shrank from the pitiful sight with loathing, and drew away. But Jesus went calmly up to the decaying flesh and leaning over it, said gently, "How beautifully white are his teeth!" The customary moral drawn from the story is one of gentleness and pity, the kindness and charity of looking at the good rather than the evil that is present. But it has a more literal meaning, and teaches clearly the lesson of beauty.

For it has come to this: that even in our pleasures we are influenced by prejudice and tradition. Some things are as empirically branded beautiful or ugly, as others are declared right or wrong, and to this dogma we conform. Korin, when he held his frame before a clothes-line fluttering with damp garments, saw not only an interesting design, but a beautiful one; yet the Monday's wash might be taken as something typically vulgar and ugly to the common mind.

We Anglo-Saxons have debased many facts of life, once rightly thought of as exquisitely beautiful, into the category of the beast. Sexual passion is the great example, but there are myriads of lesser things which, viewed calmly, purely, as some strange god able to see clearly without passion or prejudice might view them, would take on lovely aspects. When such situations approach the pathetic, as the sight of some forlorn half-naked mother nursing her child on a doorstep, or the housemaid, denied of the chance of seclusion, embracing her lover in the publicity of the park, this divine phase of common human nature is patent to the casual observer. When they approach the comic, also, it is easier to believe that every scene may have its complementary phase, and the most careless may read the joke between the lines. But much of the

more subtle delight of life escapes us, like the tree-toad in the oak, because it is so much a part of its surroundings; its charm is of intrinsic value—so subtly incorporated that we do not notice it. We are used to finding our beauty within gilt rectangles, set off from other things not so denominated as especially worthy of regard; we expect it to be labeled and highly colored.

Two things alone remain safe from this bias of custom—Love and Youth. To the lover, the tying of a shoe-lace on his mistress's foot may be as sacred a rite and may contain as much sentiment as the most impassioned caress. To the child, the mud-pile has possibilities of infinite bliss. To the one comes eternal beauty, to the other eternal mystery. And so, to touch these forever, and to lose no intermediary sensation of charm, whether it be humor, romance, pathos or inspiration, to be bound by every link that connects Youth to Love, that was my April essay!

GETTING ACQUAINTED

TWO lives moving in mysterious orbits are drawn together, and for an instant, or maybe forever after, whirl side by side. We call the encounter an introduction, and we usually proceed to stifle the wonder of it by impersonal talk of art, books or the drama. It is an every-day affair and does not commonly stir the imagination. And yet to the connoisseur in living the meeting may be an event as well as an episode. He is a discoverer come to an unknown shore—it may be the margent of a boundless sea or not, but of a certain it is swung by new tides and currents to be adventured and plumbed.

How can we, supercivilized out of almost all real emotion, develop the potential charm of this first glimpse of a new personality? It is guarded by conventionality; the shutters are down, the door is barricaded; you may knock in vain with polite interrogations, and no one appears at the window. Must we perforce set the house afire, smite or shriek aloud to bring this stranger's soul to his eyes for one search-

ing gaze, face to face? The time is so short—we must greet, and pass on to the next; alas, we but exchange easy commonplaces, and so the chance vanishes. Why not defy custom and boldly snatch in that magic moment some satisfactory taste of warm human intercourse?

Curiously enough, this strangeness—this lack of background in new acquaintances—is one of the freshest charms of meeting. Who would not throw off all restraint and talk frankly with a man from the planet Mars or Venus? Could we resurrect an inhabitant of Atlantis we could give him our whole confidence—and even a South Sea Islander, were he intelligent, might be our confessor. Where then shall we draw the line of convention? Mars is some one hundred forty million miles away—San Francisco is but three thousand five hundred—the ratio is inadequate, but there is a guarantee of candor in mere distance. May we not apply the same rule to nearer neighbors and look on them in this interesting light?

There is no such stimulating instant possible for old friends, for they are bound by preconceived ideas of personality—they are pigeonholed as this or that—circumscribed by mutual duty and sacrifice; they must reconcile present whims to past vagaries; they are

held to strict account of consistency with previous moods; but on our first meeting with another we are free of all this constraint, and if we have the courage may meet soul to soul without reserve. We may confess untellable things in that moment, for there is no perspective of formulated opinion into which the confidence must be fitted—the little secret is safe alone in the new mind, and will not be held to intolerable account. We may even for this once state a brutal truth, for we are unpledged to distressing considerations. We may be in our most sacred thoughts more intimate with a stranger than with an old friend. Such is the divine franchise of this first sudden opportunity. No compact is yet sealed; you must take me as you find me, like me or not, it matters little, since it is for us to say whether or not we shall meet again.

This play is, as Dickens says of melancholy, “one of the cheapest and most accessible of luxuries,” for the scene is always ready, set in the nearest drawing-room. Every stranger has a possible fascination and comes walking in like a prince, incognito. It is probably your own fault, not his, if the disguise is not dropped during the first impetuous flurry of talk.

Children do these things better, making friends not inch by inch, but by bold advances of genuine confi-

dence, yet approaching each new mystery with respect. So we, too, must dress these our dolls, and put them into their first mental attitudes with sincerity and trust before they will come to life. We must put real feeling into the relation—giving and taking—so much that we can not only confide our tenderest spiritual aspirations, but invest trifles with unaccustomed worth and significance.

These are not impossible sensations even for such accidental fellowship, for nothing is too unimportant to reveal personality and orient one's point of view. But we must proceed from the inside, outward—beginning with truths and thence to fancy. It is the *a priori* method; not deducing the character of your neighbor from his visible idiosyncrasies of taste and habit, but boldly inducing a new conception, making him what you will, and varying the picture by successive approximations as his words and actions modify your theory.

No one is too dull for the experiment, as no mummy is too common to be unwrapped. Granted only that he is newly found, so that you have imagination, romance and sentiment on your palette, you may paint him as you will. The colors may wash, but for the while he is your puppet and must dance to your piping, if, indeed, you do not become his.

There are those, of course, who will but cry "Oh!" and "Ah!" to your essays—dolts with neither wits nor words nor worth, who take all and give nothing; no one can set such damp stuff afire. Well, after all, though you have unmasked, retreat is still possible. With how many duller friends have you given your parole and can not escape with honor!

Indeed, it is not so desirable that we should always win, as that the game itself be worth the playing. One must not expect to make a friend at each introduction. To make the most of the minute in this way, then, to strike while the iron is hot (and, better, to heat it yourself)—this is the art of getting acquainted. It is the higher flirtation, not dependent on sex or temperament, but of many subtler spiritual dimensions, and though it soon turns into the old familiar ruts, the first steps, made picturesque by a common fancy, shall never lose their glamour, and one shall remember to the very last how the first short cuts to friendship, dared together, excited our souls.

But do not confound playing with playing a part. One may do all this sincerely, honestly giving good coin, and that is the only game worth while; for of a sudden the relationship may wake into new beauty like a dream come true, and you will find yourself in

Arcady. No more fooling then, for the real you is walking by my side, hand in hand. We shall not be sorry either, shall we, that we hurried round the first corner into the open—that we jumped a few hedges? Surely we have an infinite friendship for our inaccessible goal, and though the first rush was exhilarating, there are more inspiring heights beyond!

DINING OUT

WHY human beings are so fond of eating together and making a ceremonial of the business it is hard to say. Man is almost the only animal who prefers to consume his food in company with his kind, for even sheep and cattle wander apart as they graze, seeking private delicacies. Early in the morning, it is true, most cultivated persons are savages, preferring to breakfast in seclusion and dishabille; lunch time finds them in a slightly barbarous state, and they tolerate company; but by evening we all become gregarious and social, and resent the absence of an expected companion at the table as of a course omitted.

And so, whether we dine at home or abroad we call it a poor dinner where we have good things only to eat. The dullest, most provincial hostess has come to understand this, and each does what she can, in inviting guests, to form partnerships or combinations sympathetic and enlivening. There are, of course, always those impossibles, poor relations or what-not, whom policy or politeness imperatively demands, and every

dinner-table is, in attempt at least, a conversational constellation of stars of the first magnitude separated by lesser lights.

From these fixed orbs radiate flashes of talk, and supplementing this, the laughter of the connecting circle should follow as punctually as thunder on lightning. The hostess, like a beneficent sun, kindles and warms and sways her little system, while the servants revolve about the table in their courses, like orderly planets.

But we might push the allegory a step farther. Though the round of a score of dinners may exhibit no more unusual a cosmogony than this, yet at every thirty-third event, perhaps, we may encounter a comet! There is no prognosticating his eccentric course; he comes and goes according to a mysterious law, but wherever he appears, blazing with a new light, foreign to all our conventions, he is a compelling attraction, drawing the regular and steady astral devotees of fashion this way and that out of their orbits, shifting their axes, and upsetting social tides and seasons.

To such an innovator a dinner is given not for food but for pastime, and it is a game of which he may change the rules as soon and as often as they hamper his enjoyment. It matters little to him that he is

dressed for a feast of propriety. To him alone it is not a livery; he is not the servant of custom. If it pleases him to settle a dispute out of hand, he will send the butler for the dictionary while the discussion is hot, or more likely go himself forthright. If he wishes to see a red rose in the hair of his host's daughter over against him, he will whip round two corners to her place, and adjust the decoration. And if it is necessary to his thesis that you, his shocked or amused partner, help him illustrate a Spanish *jerabe*, you too must up and help him in the pantomime if you would not have such fine enthusiasm wasted for a scruple.

I knew one such once who retrieved an almost hopelessly misarranged dinner by his generalship, usurping the power of the hostess herself. The guests were distributed in a way to give the greatest possible discomfort to the greatest number, though from stupidity rather than from malice. Mr. Comet solved the problem at a glance. He rose before the fish was served, with a wine-glass in one hand and his serviette in the other. "The gentlemen," he announced, "will all kindly move to the left four places." It was before the day of "progressive dinner parties," and the scheme was new. The ladies gasped at his audacity, but after this change of partners the function began to succeed.

Your comet, then, must not only be a social anarchist, but he must convert the whole company, or he presents merely the sorry spectacle of a man making a fool of himself, never a sight conducive to appetite or to refined amusement, except perhaps to the cynic. He must be able to swing the situation. He must believe, and convince others, that the true object of a dinner is to amuse, and if it should take all of the time devoted to the entree for him to show the pretty sculptress at his right how to model an angel out of bread, his observing hostess should feel no pang that he has neglected his brochette. After all, the elaborate supervision of the menu was undertaken, any modern hostess will acknowledge, only that, in the dire case her guests did not succeed in amusing one another, they might at least have good things to eat. Every dish untasted in the excitement of conversation, then, should be a tribute to her higher skill in experiments with human chemistry.

If she can catch no comet, however, she must be contented with lesser meteoric wits who make up for real brilliancy by saying what they do say quickly and spontaneously; with the punsters, in short, and such hair-trigger intellects. Failing these, the last class above the bores-positive are those well-meaning diners-

out who load themselves with stories for a dinner as a soldier goes into an engagement with a belt full of cartridges. They may not get a chance for a shot very often, but given an opening, their fire is accurate and deadly till the last round is gone, when they are at the mercy of a more inventive wit. Yet even these welter-weights have their place at the table, for we must have bread as well as wine.

It was one of Lewis Carroll's pet fancies to have a dinner-table in the shape of a ring, and half the guests seated inside upon a platform which revolved slowly round the circle till each one had circumnavigated the orbit and passed opposite every guest seated on the outside of the table. But this would break up many of the little secret schemes for which the modern dinner is planned, and many a young man would suddenly find himself flirting with the wrong lady across the board.

And this last hint carries me from the exoteric to the esoteric charms of the dinner. Here, however, you must guess your own way; I dare not tell you precisely what it means when Celestine shifts her glass from left to right of her plate, nor what I answer when I raise my serviette by one corner, for Celestine and I may dine with you some day, and you may remember

our little code. You would better not invite me anyway, for, though I am no comet, yet I admit I would be mad enough to upset the claret purposely rather than have nothing exciting happen!

THE UNCHARTED SEA

AY, THERE'S the rub! If we could but forecast our dreams, who would care to keep awake? In that we are no further advanced than in the times of Pythagoras; still clumsy, ignorant amateurs in this most fascinating and mysterious game, played by every race and condition of men under the moon.

There are some, maybe, who do not dream, poor half-made men and women, to whom a waking, literal prosaic life is the whole of existence. They stay idly at home, while you and I take ship upon the Unknown Sea and navigate uncharted waters every night. Then we are poets, dunces, philosophers, clowns or mad-caps of sorts in a secret carnival, changing not only our costumes, but often our very selves, doffing conscience, habit and taste, to play a new part at each performance.

If we could but manage this raree-show, and not be mere marionettes, wired to the finger of the Magician, what tremendous adventures might we not undertake! We have rare glimpses of the Lesser Mysteries, but

the inner secrets of that inconsequential empire are still undiscovered. The revels confound us; we are whirled, intoxicated or drugged, into a realm of confusion, and, out of touch with senses, reason and will, we can not quite keep our heads clear. How many of us have tried to "dream true," like Peter Ibbetson, even to obeying the foolish formula he described, lying, hands under head, foot upon foot, murmuring his magic words?

Try as we may, those of us who are true dreamers can never quite accept the psychologist's explanation of dreams. Some cases may be easily understood, perhaps, such as the pathological influence of a Welsh rarebit, a superabundance of bed covers, or suggestive noises. We may account, too, for those absurd visions that appear so often on awakening, when one sense after another comes breaking into our consciousness, and when the mind, summoned suddenly to construct some reasonable relation between incongruous floating pictures, seizes on any explanation, however ridiculous. But of deeper dreams, dreams logical or meaningful, dreams that recur or are shared by others, modern science does not give any satisfactory theory, we can not accept them as mere subconscious work-

ings of unsatisfied desires, and we are forced, willingly enough no doubt, to apply the hypotheses of mysticism.

There are dreams, too, so progressive and educational that they seem to involve a new science unknown in this workaday world. So many of us have had experiences with levitation in our dream-life that we are, so to speak, a cult. I myself began by jumping, timing each spring with the precise moment of alighting from a previous flight, profiting by the rebound, and, after many developing experiments I am now able to float freely, even accomplishing that most difficult of all feats, rising in the air by a deliberate concentrated effort of will, even while lying on my back. Yet all of us, jumpers, flyers or floaters, must wait till that wonderful dream comes to us, after months maybe, to indulge in that most exhilarating pastime.

Children's dreams are (until they are cruelly undeceived) quite as real as their waking moments, and it may be that we shall, in time, learn the forgotten art from them. It is dependent, no doubt, on their power of visualizing imagined objects while their eyes are shut, but while still awake; but this ability to call

up the images of anything at will is as soon lost as their belief in dreams.

Though this habit and power of visualization fades and is forgotten in the growing reality of our outward life, it may not be impossible with practise to regain the proficiency, for at times of great physical fatigue and mental exaltation the power comes back, often intensified almost to the point of hallucination. If we could train our imagination then, and learn to see pictures when our eyes are shut, these might become more accurate and real, so that at the moment of sinking into unconsciousness, as we lose hold on tangible things, the vision would become one with the reality, and, still imagining and creating, we might pass over the footlights and dream true. To most of us there comes a recognizable moment when we know we are just at the border of sleep; if we could then with our last effort of will keep control of the moving pictures we might go wherever we wished.

We might learn, too, to remember more of what happens in the night. Usually we give what has passed in dream no more than an indulgent smile, and forget the strangeness of it all as soon as we are well awake. It is as if we had hurriedly turned the pages of an illustrated book. We recall, here and there, a few

striking pictures, beautiful or comic, and the volume is replaced upon the shelves, not to be taken down till the next evening. It is a book from which we learn little; its contents are not even amusing to any one else, who has just as fanciful tales in his own dream-land library. If we could, on first awakening, impress our minds with the reality of our dreams, we might be able to recall more and more, and find that in spite of their incongruity there was some law which governed their visitation and some meaning in their grotesque patterns.

To one who dreams frequently, bedtime can not fail to be something to look forward to, to hope and to prepare for with efforts to capture in the net of sleep some beautiful dream. May we not, sometime, find the proper bait, and lie down confident that we shall be duly enchanted in some delightful way, according to our desires? Till then we must each buy our nightly ticket in Sleep's lottery, and draw a blank or a prize, as Morpheus wills.

Some say that the most refreshing sleep is absolute unconsciousness of time—that one should shut one's eyes, to open them only in the morning, with the night all unaccounted for. But no true dreamer will assent to this; he knows it is not so. I was told in my youth

that if I turned the toes of my boots toward the bed I should have a nightmare. I confess I have never dared try it. But, rather than not dream at all, I believe I should be tempted to hazard the experiment.

THE ART OF PLAYING

TIME was when we made our own toys; when a piece of twine, a spool, a few nails and a good supply of imagination could keep us busy and happy all day long. There were no newfangled iron toys "made in Germany," so tiresome in their inevitable little routine of performance, so easily got out of order, and so hard, metallic and realistic as to be hardly worth the purchase.

A penny would, indeed, buy some funny carved wooden thing that aroused a half-hour's excitement, but it was never quite so alluring as when in the front window of the toy-shop. Such queer animals never became thoroughly acclimated to the nursery, and they lost their luster in a half-holiday. The things that gave permanent satisfaction were home-made, crude and capable of transformation. A railway train made of chairs might, with a small effort of the fancy, become a ship or a dragon. Are there such amateur toy-builders now, in this age when everything is perfect and literal, when even a box of building-blocks contains a book of plans to supply imaginative design to

the modern child? Indeed, many children are now-years too lazy even to do their own playing. I have heard of one who was used to sit on a chair and order his nurse to align his nine-pins and bowl them down for him!

Perhaps one notices the lack of creative ability in children more in the city where ready-made toys are cheap and accessible, than in the country where the whole world is full of wonderful possibilities for entrancing pastime. Nature is the universal playmate, perpetually parodying herself in miniature for the benefit of those who love to amuse themselves with her toys. Every brook is a little river, every pond an unfathomable sea. She plants tiny forests of fern and raises microscopic mountains in every sand-bank. Flowers and plants furnish provender for Lilliputian groceries, the oak showers acorn cups; what wonder we believe, as long as we can, in fairies?

And yet, strange to say, it is the city more often than the country child who feels the charm of these marvels. The freshness and the strangeness breed a fascinated wonder; it is, after flagged pavements and brick walls, almost too good to be true. The juvenile rustic is more practically familiar with Nature. It is his business to know when the flowers come, where

berries ripen and birds nest. It is scarcely play to him, it is a science to be applied to his personal profit. The woods and rivulets are his familiar domain, to be forayed and hunted specifically for gain. But this, though it is delightful, is not play. For him there is no glamour over the fields until long after, when, veiled from home, his native countryside has become inaccessible.

Perhaps the art of playing is, after all, a matter more of temperament than environment, for one sees, at times, good sport even in the city streets, though it is rare nowadays. I had my own full share of it, for my youth was an age of pure romance. My clan had its own code and its own traditions. Every man of us had his suit of wooden armor, his well-wrought weapons and his fiery steed. We were all for Scott. We had our Order, small, but well up in the technique of feudal ways, facile in sword-play, both with the thin, sinewy hard-pine rapier and the huge two-handed, double-hilted battle-sword that should stand just as high as one's head. On the brick sidewalks we tilted on velocipedes, full in view of the anxious passers-by. *Cap-à-pie* in pine sheathed with tin, with a shield blazoned with a tiger couchant, and inscribed with a Latin motto out of the back of the dictionary, many a long

red lance I shivered and many a wheel I broke. On Warren Avenue I did it, opposite the church. What would I not give, now, to see such sights in town!—instead, I watch little boys smoking cigarettes on the street corners, waiting for their girls.

I knew a youngster, too, who organized in his town a post-office department, established letter-boxes and a regular service of boy carriers. He drew and colored the stamps himself—you will find them in few collections, though they should have enormous value from their rarity. Such games are consummate play, even though the sport goes awry all too soon; it is too great to last!

It is the older brother who should give finesse to such sport. Without him, complications arise that accomplish at last the ruin of the game. Many of us do not truly learn to play until it is too late to do so with dignity, and to these, the appreciation of the young gives a fine excuse for prolonging the diversion. We fancy we can not, when grown up, play imaginative games for the pure joy of it, as does the child; we think we must have an ulterior motive. Yet the father who whittles out a boat for his son often gets more delight than the child, who would far rather do it

himself, no matter how much more crudely accomplished.

The theater is the typical play for grown-ups; the name itself, "play," is significant of the unquenchable tendency of youth. And this reminds me of a most amusing case where two grown-ups dared to be absolutely ingenuous. It was on a honeymoon, when if ever, adults have the right to yield to juvenile impulses. As the groom was titled and the bride fair, society took it ill that the two should retire to their country house and deny access to all neighbors. One at last called, too important to be denied admittance by the servants, and the astonished visitor discovered the happy pair stretched over the dining-room table, training flies whose wings had been clipped, to pull, in a harness of threads, little paper wagons! This had been their absorbing occupation for ten blissful days!

An important element of play seems to be the doing of things in miniature. See Stevenson, for instance, prone upon the floor, involved in romantic campaigns, massing his troops of tin soldiers, occupying strategic positions in hall and passage, skirmishing over the upstairs "roads of the Third Class, impassable for artil-

lery," intercepting commissary trains laboring up from the Base of Operations in the kitchen, deploying cavalry-screens upon the rug, and out-maneuvering the wily foe that defends the veranda, both being bound by the strict treaties of the play. There is your ideal big brother, and the game of toy soldiers is glorified into weeks of excitement!

The Japanese, immortal children, carry the game of diminution to its extreme. The dwarfed trees and the excruciating carved ivories are not the only symptoms of this delightful disease; for the perfection of the spirit of play one must see their miniature gardens, often the life-employment of the owners. No matter how small the patch of ground employed, every inch is perfect. Pebble by pebble, almost grain by grain, the area is arranged, the tiny rivulet is guided between carefully curved banks, wee bridges span the shores, little lanterns and pagodas are artfully placed, plants and flowers are sown, trees planted, fishes are domiciled, till the garden is a replica of Nature at her best. Each view is a toy landscape, and without a scale, as seen in a photograph, for instance, one might think it a garden of the gods.

And yet there is a sort of play, too, where one may use infinite distances, macrocosms for microcosms, if

one has the courage and the power of visualization. These games are purely mental, feats of the imagination, though not nearly so difficult as might be thought. I know a sober workaday lawyer, for instance, who combines the two methods with extraordinary cleverness. His income is not derived solely from his practise, I need hardly say. You will not catch him at his fascinating diversion, for his table is strewn with books and papers, and his playthings are not noticeable among the professional litter.

I have known him to sit for hours gazing at the table, and, once in his confidence—for there is a fraternity of players, and one must give the grip and prove fellowship—he will tell you that he has shrunk to but an inch in height, so that, to him, his desk seems to be some three hundred feet long by a hundred feet wide, and its plateau is elevated two hundred feet above the floor; as high, that is, as a church. Assuming that he has, by some miraculous means, shrunk to one-fiftieth of his stature, the size of everything visible is, of course, increased in a like proportion. His diverting occupation, under this queer state of things, is to explore his little domain, and exist as well as is possible.

What adventures has he not had! There was the

terrific combat with a cockroach as big as a dragon, which he finally slew with a broken needle! There was the dust storm, when the care-taker swept, and the huge snow crystals like white pie-plates, that came in when the window was opened. He had an enormous difficulty in getting water from a glass tumbler, and he broke his teeth upon the crystals of sugar that, as a lawyer, he had been thoughtful enough to strew upon the table for the benefit of himself as an Inching. I believe he is now attempting to escape to the floor by means of a spool of thread, if he can not make up his mind to risk a descent by means of a paper parachute. It is a world of his own, as real to him as the child's toy paradise, a retreat immune from the cares of his daily life, a never-tiring playground, with perpetual discoveries possible. He, if any one, has discovered not only the art of playing, but has applied the science as well!

THE USE OF FOOLS

WHAT a dull world it would be if every one were modest, discreet and loyal to that conformity which is called good taste! if, in short, there were no fools to keep us amused. What would divert us from the deadly routine of seriousness? What toy scandal would we have to discuss at dinner? What would leaven this workaday world of commonplaces if every one were gifted with common sense? Is it not, when you stop to think of it, a bit inconsiderate to discountenance buffoonery and to resent innocently interesting impropriety? Should we not rather encourage eccentricity with what flattering hypocrisies we may, so that we shall never be at a loss for things to smile at and talk about?

A fair sprinkling of fools in the world is as enlivening as a pinch of salt in a loaf of bread. They give a relish to life and flavor with a brisk spicery of nonsense what would otherwise be oppressively flat. Civilized existence, if it were always cooked up and served to us by Mrs. Grundy herself, would be unpal-

atable enough ; but luckily her infallible recipes are not always carried out, and a few plums and cloves get into her pudding.

We may not care to play the part of public jesters ourselves, but the least we can do is to be grateful to those who are willing to become absurd for our benefit. Patronize them daintily, therefore, lest they backslide into propriety ; remember that there is such a thing as enjoyment without ridicule. To make fun of a person to his face is a brutal way of amusing one's self ; be delicate and cunning, and keep your laugh in your sleeve, lest you frighten away your game.

But there will doubtless always be enough who are willing to play the guy, whether we encourage or condemn. The fool is a persistent factor in society, and yet the common misconception of his status and economic function is silly and unfair. With the prig and the crank, the fool has been reviled from time immemorial and persecuted out of all reason. He is protected by no legislation ; your fool is always in season, and is the target for universal contempt. Instead of this perpetual fusillade of wits, there should be a "close season" for fools to allow them to propagate and grow fearless, after which we could make game of them in safety of a full supply. Since he is, in a way, the

lubricator of the wheels of life, a coiner of smiles, he should be carefully bred to give the greatest possible amount of diversion. He should be trained like an actor that his best points may be brought out; he should be paid a salary or kept in livery, as of yore, to amuse the public, with no need or excuse for sobriety.

But until the fool is properly trained and appreciated and his place assured, we must put up with the amateurs that haunt the street and drawing-room. It is too much to hope for the sight of a zany every time we go out-of-doors, but, when we do encounter one, what a ray of sunshine gleams athwart our strict fashions—poor sober dun slaves to style and custom! If we chance on a woman who dares perpetrate her own radical theories of dress, who combines impossible hues, or commits a gay indiscretion in millinery, how superbly she is distinguished, for the moment, from the ruck and swarm of victims to good taste! She is at once an event and a portent. The afternoon is quaintly illuminated with a phenomenon, and we scan with new interest and expectation the dull and somber throng.

How small a deviation from the mode, indeed, is necessary to provoke a revivifying smile! Every such

unconscious laughing-stock is a true benefactor, ministering to our sense of superiority. Were we never to see the freaks, we would not know how glorious is our own uncompromising regularity. Truly, if we have sufficient conceit, every one in the world, in a way of thinking, may be considered foolish relatively to our own criterion. "All the world is queer except thee and me," said the Quaker, "and even thee is a little queer!"

Such praise of fools may seem extravagant or illogical, but if it is so, it must be not because the fool is not helpful and stimulating in society, but because, after all, he is not so easily identified as one might suppose. Celestine tells me she never calls a man a fool, but instead asks him why he does so—and in this way she often learns something. That is the most disconcerting trait of fools; often, on investigation, what appears to be genuine nonsense is but the consistent carrying out of a clever and original idea, whose novelty alone excites amusement. The fool thus cheats us of our due enjoyment by being in the right. It seems dishonest of a fool to instruct; it is beside the mark, and outside his proper sphere; and yet even Confucius is said to have learned politeness

from the impolite. To see one's own faults and weaknesses caricatured spoils the laugh that should testify to the folly.

We can not be sure, therefore, that the ass who amuses us by his eccentric absurdities may not eventually cheat us of the final victory by proving to be but the vanguard of a new custom to which we or our children must perforce in time succumb and fall into line with him far behind, only then to count our present attitude foolish and old-fashioned. Let us therefore laugh while we may, for your fool is but a chameleon who refuses to change color. What to-day is arrant silliness may to-morrow be good horse-sense, wherefore it is wise to watch fools carefully when you find them, lest the sport spoil overnight, and you yourself become ridiculous, while the fool takes your place as the amused philosopher.

The word "fad," they say, was derived from the initial letters of the phrase "for a day." So we, the followers of the latest mode and mood, are, it would seem, the true ephemera, and the fools who defy the local custom are immortal. The fool is merely an anachronism. All inventors, most poets and some statesmen have been honored with the title, since we

laugh chiefly at what we do not understand. There are more synonyms for "fool" than for any other word in the language!

So we must take our chances and smile at all and sundry, at men of one idea, hobby riders, cranks, poseurs, managing mamas and antic youths, blushing brides and fond parents, bounders, pedants, bigots and hens with their heads cut off. Laugh at them, the character parts in the comedy of life, for the show is amusing, but be not resentful if you find the privilege of laughing is a common right, and you in your turn may become a victim. For, strange as it may seem, many of these actors may be so foolish as to think you the fool yourself!

ABSOLUTE AGE

WHEN I was a child I invented a game so simple and so passive that its enjoyment was permitted even on the rigorous Sundays of my youth. Upon a slate I ruled vertical columns, and at the head of these I wrote, "Men, women, boys, girls, babies, horses, dogs." Then, seated at a window commanding the street I made note of the passers-by, and as fast as they appeared in sight I made a mark for each in the appropriate column. The compilation of this petty census was a pleasing pastime, and, moreover, it seemed to me that my categories were obviously complete. There were, in my world, but men and women, boys, girls and babies—what else, indeed?

But this primary classification of sex and years did not satisfy me long, and I discovered that my system must be amended if I would segregate—mentally now—the various types I encountered. There were, for instance, good persons and bad ones, men educated and ignorant, rich and poor, and I superimposed on my first list one after another of these modifying conditions. But with a larger view of life these crude

distinctions overlapped and became confused, and I saw that the whole system was but a rude makeshift.

Yet until I could pigeonhole a new acquaintance in my own mind and put him with others of his kind I was never quite satisfied. Up to a certain stage in development, what we are most struck with is the difference between persons, but after the first intellectual climacteric we begin to see resemblances, invisible before, that knit men of different aspect together; and that game of synthesis once begun we must play it till we die. Every new acquaintance is an element of our experience—a new fact refuting or corroborating our theory of life, and, though we often may put the case into a separate compartment and label the specimen “unique,” before long we shall probably have to reconsider the whole collection and devise a new system of arrangement for the complex characteristics of human nature.

What analysis, then, can we adopt which shall prove universally satisfactory? If we rank men according to mental, moral or spiritual attributes, one quality is sure to contradict or affect the other, and it is hard to decide which trait is paramount. Friendship is dependent on none of these things, and yet in our affections we recognize, almost unconsciously, grades

and qualities of attraction and kinship. Of a bunch of letters at our breakfast plate, we are sure to open a special one first or last, as the expectation of pleasure may decide. We accept this nearness, this intimate relationship, without reasoning; it is manifested in the first flash of recognition of the handwriting, at sight of a photograph, at the sound of a voice or a name. Some are indubitably of our own clan, and others, however their charm or a temporary passion may blind us for a time, are foreigners, and speak another language of the emotions. There are invisible groups of souls, mysteriously related, and the tie is indissoluble.

So I have come to adopt as the final classification what, for want of a better term, I must call the Absolute Age—age or condition, that is, not relative, not dependent on the year of one's birth. No one, surely, has failed to observe children who seem to be older than their parents in possibility of development. One knows that in a few years this child will have caught up to and passed his father or mother in soundness of judgment, in a sense of the relative importance of things, in the power to distinguish sham, convention and prejudice from things of vital import. This child is older in point of Absolute Age. When his soul has

served its juvenile apprenticeship in the world of the senses he shall understand truths his parents never knew.

This capacity for comprehending life does not seem to be dependent on actual definite experience with the world. The villager may have this hidden wisdom as clearly as the man who has seen and done, who has fought, loved and traveled far and well. The mystics hold that we have all lived before, and that some have profited by their experiences in former lives and have attained a fairer conception of the very truth. But, though this illustrates what is meant by the term Absolute Age, it is by no means necessary to accept such an explanation of the effects we perceive. It is enough that we can definitely classify our friends by their emotions and desires, and by their point of view on life. In other words, some are philosophers and some are not. And even the philosophers are of varying sects. Some have a keen, childlike enthusiasm for the more obvious forms of excitement, for all that is new and strange and marvelous, while others are incapable of being shocked, surprised or embarrassed—they have poise, and prefer the part of observer to that of actor in the game of life.

And yet, too, there is a simplicity that comes from

a greater Absolute Age, a relish for real things that persists with enthusiasm. It is by this simplicity one may distinguish the cult from those that are merely *blasé* or worldly wise. The joy in the taste of the fresh apple under the tongue, or in the abandon of the child at play, in the strength of youth and the grace of women—this is a joy that does not fade; no, not even for those who would not trouble to go to the window if the king rode by! As a man can learn much by travel without losing his capacity for enjoying his native town, so one can enjoy life intellectually to the utmost without ever losing one's grasp on one's self, without being intoxicated by excitement or blinded by egoism, and yet feel still the clean sane joys of youth to the last.

We have come to our Absolute Age by different paths. If we are of the same status, you and I, you may have learned one lesson and I another, yet the sum of our experience is the same. We are akin spiritually, although we have not had the same process of development. You, perhaps, have fought down hate and I have conquered dishonesty, but we are calmer and wiser, we think, than those whom we smile at quietly when we view their eagerness for things that no longer concern us. We recognize, too, that there

are others to whose attainments our own powers are infantile. But in either case the superiority is neither mental nor moral nor spiritual—it is that mysterious inherent quality we call “caste.”

THE MANUAL BLESSING

SURELY if there is one sharp active sensation that, in this changeful life of ours, we never tire of, never outgrow, it is in the satisfaction of creative manual work. There is a conservation of pleasure as there is a conservation of energy, and our taste is being continually transmuted and evolved. One by one we outlive the joys of youth, the delights of physical exercise, the zest of travel, the beatitude of emotion, the singing raptures of love, passing from each to a more mature appeal, a more refined appetite, a subtler demand of the intellect or of the spirit. The familiar games lose their savor, the dance gives way to the drama, travel to the calmer investigation of homely miracles. We tire of seeing and begin to read, feasting peacefully at the banquet of the arts that other men have spread. This is, for many of us, what age means—a giving-up of active for passive pleasures when the old games lose their charm.

But the joy of creation does not fade, for in that lies our divinity and our claim to the eternal verities. Each new product arouses the same thrill, the same

spiritual excitement, the same pride of victory, and yet, strangely enough, though we think we work only for the final notch of accomplishment, it is not the completion but the construction that holds us entranced. Not the last stroke, but every stroke brings victory! It is like the climbing of a mountain. Do we endure the toil merely for the sake of the view at the summit? No, but for the primitive passion of conflict, the inch-by-inch fight against odds, the heaping of endeavor on endeavor, the continual measuring of what has been done with what remains to do. The finishing climax is but the exclamation point at the end of the sentence—most of the sensation has been used up before we come to the full stop, and that point serves but to sum up our emotions in a visible emblem of success.

Many of us believe we are debarred from the exercise of this divine birthright, the joy of creation. We have neither talent nor genius—not even that variety which consists in the ability to take infinite pains. Are we not mistaken in this? I think we may each have our share of the immortal stimulus.

To understand this, we must go back and back in the history of the race, and there we shall find that this satisfaction, this sane and virile delight in con-

struction, was possible to the meanest member of the tribe. Its enjoyment came chiefly in the exercise of a laborious persistency in little things. The combination or addition of the simplest elements achieved a positive pleasurable result. The paleolithic man chipped and chipped at his flint until the arrow-head was perfected, and his joy, had he been able to analyze it, was not so much in the last stroke as in every stroke. Not so much that he had himself with his own hands made something, as that he had been *making* something of use and beauty, and the possibility of that joy abiding with him as long as he lived. The makers of ancient pottery repeated the same shapes and designs, or, if their fancy soared, dared new inventions; but the satisfaction was in the doing. The carvers and joiners of the Middle Ages worked as amateurs in cottage and hovel, and in their work lay their content; no tyranny could wrest from them this well-spring of pleasure. Old age could but weaken the hand; I doubt if it could tame the immemorial joy of creation.

We can not all be professional mechanics, for the division of labor has cast our lot more and more with the workers in intellectual pursuits. But we might make handicraft an avocation, if not a vocation, and

that regimen would help our digestion, perhaps, more than pepsin or a course of the German baths. Were I a physician I should often recommend the craft cure—a panacea for dyspepsia, ennui and nostalgia.

Here is my modern health resort, my sanitorium for these most desperate of diseases: a little hamlet of shops and tents on the foothills of the Coast Range in California, where as you work you can look across a green valley to the blue Pacific. Here in this new land nature calls fondly to your soul, and you may turn to the primitive delights of living and taste the tang of the dawn of civilization, fresh and wholesome as a wild berry.

Squatting on the bare sun-parched ground, with an Indian blanket over his shoulders, is a corpulent banker with a flint hammer battering a water-worn boulder. Thus, less than a hundred years ago, the Temecula Indians hollowed out their stone mortars on this very mesa. Thus they spent happy days, slept like bears, and were up with the birds, each morn a day younger than yesterday. In this lodge of deerskins, where the ground is spread with yellow poppies, sits an ex-secretary of legation, who has known everything, seen everything, done everything but this—to cut with a knife of shell strange patterns upon a circular horn

gorget. Finished, his wife might wear it with pride at the Court of St. James, yet it is but the reproduction of a prehistoric ornament, its figures smeared with ocher, cobalt and vermilion, and inlaid with lumps of virgin copper by the mound-builders of the Mississippi Valley. In this open shelter of bamboo, a trysting-place for meadow-larks and song-sparrows, lies stretched upon the ground an East India warehouseman, all his gout and lumbago forgotten in the rapturous delight of printing a pattern of checkered stripes with a carved wooden block upon a sheet of *tapa* that he himself—unaided, mind you—has pounded from the fibrous bark of the paper mulberry. His strenuous daughter, once world-worn and frozen, has left Nietzsche, Brahms and the cult of the symbolists, to sit cross-legged and weave the woolly zigzags of a Navajo blanket. It is the first thing she has made with her ten fingers since she baked mud pies in the sun! Had she a scrap of mirror in her bungalow she could now face it without mortification. An open-air hand-loom is good for the complexion.

But you need not journey to California. Rather make a pilgrimage to your own south attic. If you do but construct cardboard model houses with isinglass windows in your breakfast-room, you will perhaps

find that more diverting than collecting cameos or first editions. If you can only compile a concordance to *Alice in Wonderland* you may achieve a hygienic and rejuvenating distraction. Can you cut, stamp, gild, lacquer and emboss a leather belt? Can you hammer jewelry out of soft virgin silver? No? But you could, though, if you tried! Can you forget the impositions of convention in the rapt glow of pride in sawing and nailing together a wooden box? No matter how small it might be, how leaky of joint or loose of cover, it would hold all your worries!

THE DESERTED ISLAND

A FRIEND of mine is curiously hampered by a limitation precluding him from association with any one conversant with the details of the manufacture of cold-drawn wire. To show that this self-imposed abstinence may indicate a most charming devotion to an ideal, rarely shown by the commonplace, is the object of this thesis, and that, too, despite the fact that an indiscriminating extension of the same principle would lead the radical to eschew the society of most of his acquaintances, as well as bar out the whole domain of didactic literature.

When the day is done, and that entrancing hour is come for which some spend many of their waking hours in anticipation, to those blessed with fancy, the curtain of the dark arises, and within the theater of the Night are played strange comedies. To a select performance I invite all uninitiated who have never enjoyed the drama of the Deserted Island—the perfect and satisfactory employment for the minutes that elapse after retiring and before the anchor is weighed and the voyage begun upon the Sea of Dreams.

There are undoubtedly more than I am aware of who are happy enough to maintain deserted islands of their own, many more, perhaps, than would confess to the possession. To some the history may be well under way; they have long since discovered their demesne, and many improvements have already been successfully completed. Others, more adventurous, handicapped by stricter limitations and more meager outfit, are still struggling with the primal demands of food and shelter. But to those whose imaginations have never put so far out to sea, and would welcome this modest diversion, I advise an expedition of discovery and exploration this very night. You have but to go to bed, close your eyes, and after a few preliminaries you are there!

Authorities differ as to the allowable equipment for the occupancy of the sequestered territory. I myself hold that it is manifestly unfair to be provided with tools of any kind; to have a knife, now, I would call cheating. Surely the only legitimate beginning is to be vomited upon the beach stark naked from the sea, after some fearsome shipwreck in mid-ocean. Then, after years of occupancy, a man might taste the pride of his own resources, unfettered by any legacy inherited from civilization. Settle this point as you may,

when the conditions of the game are once understood, the whole history of Science is to be re-enacted.

I have a friend who arrived on the scene in an open boat containing a keg of water, a crowbar, a pruning-knife, a red silk handkerchief and a woman's petticoat; and with these promiscuous accessories has, in the course of years, transformed the place, which now boasts a stone castle, entirely inhabitable. His island is about two miles long and a half-mile wide—much too narrow for comfort, I assert; the proportions should be approximately five miles by three, with one dominant hill from which the whole territory may be surveyed.

But the owner of the other island—he of the cold-drawn wire—boldly asserts his right to a half-dozen laborers, presumably natives, and with this force at his disposal he has done wonders with his fief. Glass has been manufactured, fabrics woven, ore smelted and fine roads constructed, so that there now remains nothing to be desired but bicycles upon which he and his slaves may traverse the highways. But in vain his unskilled assistants look to him for advice; rack his wits as he may, he can devise no adequate system of making cold-drawn wire, and he is beginning to lose caste with his followers.

Now at first sight one might think it necessary for him only to consult an encyclopedia, or to visit an iron mill, yet this course is strictly barred out by the rules of the game, which compels one to use only such information as comes naturally to hand—for one is likely to be cast ashore upon a desert island at any moment, and it is then too late for the research and education that have been before neglected. With any ingenious fellow who has his own amateur ideas on the subject, one may, of course, talk freely; for he may represent one of the more intelligent of the natives; but all they who really know whereof they speak are to be avoided. So the problem of the cold-drawn wire is still unsolved.

I know of an artist who, free on this enchanted spot, has turned his energies to those diverting pursuits for which his studio leaves no time, and he builds gigantic rock mosaics on the cliffs, selecting from the many colored boulders on the beach. Luxuries are his only necessities even in his daily life, and the enormity of his trifling on this holiday playground is a thing to wonder at. His art, so used to a censorship of Nature, in his professional mimicries, here goes boldly forth and so mends, prunes and patches the aspect of his island that the place is now, he says, absolutely

perfect; a consummation not altogether discreditable to a nude near-sighted man, whose eye-glasses were washed off before he arrived on the spot!

But, taking the situation a bit more seriously, what will he be in the years to come? By what gradations shall the lonely artist sink to low and lower levels, abandoned by the stimulus of the outer world, the need for advance, and the struggle for recognition? How soon would he lose the desire to render, in the medium at hand, the lovely forms of nature about him, the subtle tones of the earth and air, lapsing by stages into ever cruder forms of expression, till the whole history of his development had been reversed, and he became content with rude squares, triangles and circles for his patterns, the barbarous effigies of the human form, and the primary colors that satisfy the savage?

And the sense of humor, too—that universal solvent of all our miseries, the oil that lubricates the cumbersome machinery of life—how soon would that go? Is it not, in the last analysis, dependent on the by-play of the social relationship of men? The inconsistencies of our fellows must be first noticed before we can get the reflected light of ridicule on our own grotesque actions. It would indubitably be lost in such

a sojourn, our impatience would have no foil, we would take ourselves more and more seriously until the end came on that day when we had at last forgotten how to laugh.

But, after all, as this text of the hypothetical deserted island is better fitted for a romance than for a sermon, we may leave such forebodings and trace out only the rising curve of improvement. And so, too, interesting as it might be to experience, we may leave aside the moral speculations incident to the discussion of the case where the place becomes occupied by a man and a woman. The possibilities of a shipwreck in company are not for such a brief memoir as this; they offer consideration too intimate for these discreet pages, and are best left to the exclusion of a private audience.

But choose your company carefully, I entreat you, if you are not soberly minded to be shipwrecked alone. I know of persons with whom, were I cast ashore, there could be no end not tragic, albeit these are highly respectable and praiseworthy individuals, who never did any harm except in that trick of manner by which we recognize the bore. I am often inclined to test the merits of others by mentally permitting them a short visit to my island, but the hazard is too great,

and the thought of the possibility of their footprints upon the sand unnerves me.

Yet, to a distant islet of this fantastic archipelago I seriously consider consigning certain impossible acquaintances, absolutely intolerable personalities, whose probable fate, forced to endure one another's society, interests me beyond words. Upon one side of this far-away retreat rises a steep cliff overhanging the sea, and here I behold in imagination one after another of these marooned unfortunates pushed headlong over the slope, as, unable to support the society of his companions, each has in turn, by some stratagem, lured his hated accomplice in misery to the summit of the bluff.

Of one island I have not yet spoken. I can get no description of it save that it lies sleeping in the summer sun, washed by the sapphire tides and fanned by the cool south winds, its olive slopes rising softly from the beach, marked by a grove of fruit trees at the crest. More the owner will not tell, for Celestine says there is no use for a deserted island after it is charted; but by these signs I shall know the place, and my trees are felled and my sails are plaited that shall yet bear me over toward the southwest!

THE SENSE OF HUMOR

MUCH as one may look through the small end of a telescope and find an unique and intrinsic charm in the spectacle there offered, so to certain eyes the whole visible universe is humorous. From the apparition of this dignified little ball, rolling soberly through the starry field of the firmament, to the unwarrantable gravity of a neighbor's straw hat, macrocosm and microcosm may minister to the merriment of man. There is more in heaven and earth than is dreamed of in the philosophy of the Realist.

It is one attribute of a man of parts that he shall have, in his mental vision, what corresponds to the "accommodation" of his eye, a flexibility of observation that enables him to adapt his mind to the focus of humor. Myopia and strabismus we know; the dullard can point their analogies in the mental optics, but for this other misunderstood function we have no name; and yet, failing that, we have dignified it as a sense apart—the sense of humor. But no form of lens has been discovered to correct its aberration and transfer the message in pleasurable terms to the lagging

brain; and, unless we attempt hypnotism as a last resort, the prosiest must go purblind for life, missing all but the baldest jokes of existence.

Is it not significant, that from the ancient terminology of leech-craft, this word "humor" has survived in modern medicine, to be applied only to the vitreous fluid of the eye? For humor is the medium through which all the phenomena of human intercourse may be witnessed, and for those normal minds that possess it, tints this world with a rare color—like that of the mysterious ultra-violet rays of the spectrum. And indeed, to push further into modern science and speculation, perhaps this ray does not undulate, but shoots forth undeviating as Truth itself, like that from the cathode pole. Or, does it not strike our mental retina from some secret Fourth Direction?

But this is mere verbiage; similes, flattering to the elect, but unconvincing to the uninitiate. Yet, as I am resolved that humor is essentially a point of view, I would have a try at proselytizing for the doctrine. For here is a religion ready made to my hand; I have but to raise my voice and become its prophet. The seeds are all sown, the Fraternity broods, hidden in hidden chapters, guarding the grand hailing sign; who knows but that a spark might not touch off this sea-

soned fuel, and the flame carry everything before it. O my readers, I give you the philosophy of mirth, the cult of laughter! Yet it is an esoteric faith, mind you, unattainable by the multitude. Not of the "Te-he! Papa's dead!" school, nor of the giggling punster's are its devotees. No comic weekly shall be its organ. It must be hymned not by the hoarse guffaw, but in the quiet inward smile—and for its ritual, I submit the invisible humor of the commonplace. O paradox!

Brethren, from this flimsy pulpit, I assert with sincerity, that everything on two legs (and most on four), sleeping or awake, bow-legged or knock-kneed, has its humorous aspect. The curtain never falls on the diversion. You will tell me, no doubt, that here I ride too hard. Adam, you will say with reason, set aside in the beginning certain animals for our perpetual amusement—to wit: the goose, the monkey, the ostrich, the kangaroo, and, as a sublime afterthought—symbol of the Eternal Feminine—the hen. Civilization, you may admit, has added to these the goat—but, save in rare moods of insanity, as when the puppy pursues the mad orbit of his tail, the sight of only the aforesaid beasts makes for risibility. The cat, you will say, is never ridiculous.

But here again we must hark back to the major

premise, unrecognized though it be by the science of Esthetic, that humor lies in the point of view. If I could prove it by mere iteration it would go without further saying that it is essentially subjective rather than objective. Surely there is no humor in insensate nature, as there is little enough in art and music. The bees, the trees, the fountains and the mountains take themselves seriously enough, and though, according to the minor poets, the fields and the brooks are at times moved to laughter, it is from a vegetable, pointless joy-of-life. Through the human wit alone, and that too rarely, the rays of thought are refracted in the angle of mirth, and split into whimsical rays of complementary sensations and contrasts.

When we lay off the mantle of seriousness and relax the flexors and extensors, if we are well fed, healthy, and of a peaceful mood and capable of indolence, men and women, and even we ourselves, should become to our view players on the stage of life. And what then is comedy but tragedy seen backward or downside up? It is the negative or corollary of what is vital in this great game of life. The custom has been, however, to give it a place apart and unrelated to the higher unities, as the newspapers assign their witticisms to isolated columns. Rather is it the subtle

polarity induced by graver thought, the reading between the lines of the page. To appreciate nonsense requires a serious interest in life. And as, to the vigorous intellect, rest does not come through inactivity so much as by a change of occupation, the happy humorist is refreshed by the solace of impersonality.

For, to the initiate, his own inconsistencies and indiscretions are no less diverting than those of his associates, and should frequently give rise to emotions that impel him to hurry into a corner and scream aloud with mirth. It is ever the situation that is absurd, and never the victim; and in this lies the secret of his ability to appreciate a farce of which he himself is the hero. He must disincarnate himself as the whim blows, and hang in the air, a god for the time, gazing with amusement at the play of his own ridiculous failures. In some such way do the curious turn over the patterned fabric, to discover, on the reverse, the threads and stitches that explain the construction of the design.

This faculty, then, gives one the stamp of caste by which one may know his brethren the world over, an order of whose very existence many shall never be aware, till, in some after life, some grinning god conducts them to the verge of the heavens, and, leaning

over a cloud, bids them behold the spectacle of this little planet swarming with its absurdly near-sighted denizens.

Ohé la Renaissance! for this is to be the Age of Humor. We travail for the blithe rebirth of joy into the world. The Decadence, with its morbid personalities and accursed analysis of exotic emotion almost destroyed humor; yet we may adopt its methods and refine the simplicity of primary impulse, thus increasing the whole sum of pleasure with the delicate nuances that amplify the waves of feeling. Hark, O my reader! Do you not hear them, rising like overtones and turning the melody into a divine harmony?

THE GAME OF CORRESPONDENCE

THE receipt of a letter is no longer the event it was in the old stage-coach days; railways, telephones and the penny postage have robbed it of all excitement. One expects now one's little pile of white, blue and green envelopes beside one's plate at breakfast, along with one's toast and coffee, and one tastes its contents as one opens the matutinal egg. We have forgotten how to write interesting letters as we have forgotten how to fold and wafer a sheet of foolscap or sharpen a quill. Some of our missives are not even worth a cursory glance, many by no means deserve an answer, and most are speedily forgotten in the columns of the morning journal.

Yet, at times, on red-letter days, we find one among the number that demands epicurean perusal; it is not to be ripped open and devoured in haste, it insists on privacy and attention. This has a flavor that the salt of silence alone can bring out; a dash of interruption destroys its exquisite delicacy. More than this, it must

be answered while it is still fresh and sparkling, after which, if it be of the true vintage, it can afford still another sip to inspire your postscript.

To your room then with this, and lock the door, or at any rate save it for an impregnable leisure. Open it daintily and entertain it with distinction and respect; efface any previous mood and hold yourself passive to its enchantment. It need depend on no excited interest in the writer for its reception, for it has an intrinsic merit; it is the work of an artist; it is a fascinating move on the chess-board of the most alluring, most accessible game in the world.

Though the fire of such a letter need have neither the artificiality of flirtation nor the intensity of love, yet it must both light and warm the reader. It is not valuable for the news it brings, for if it be a work of art the tidings it bears are not so important as the telling of them. It must be sincere and alive, revealing and confessing, a letter more from the writer than to the reader, as if it were written in face of a mirror rather than before the photograph of the receiver; and yet the communication must be spelled in the cypher of your friendship, to which only you have the key. We have our separate languages, each with the other, and there are emotions we can not dupli-

cate. This missive is for you, and for you only, or it ranks with a business communication. It is minted thought, invested, put out at loan for a time, bringing back interest to stimulate new speculations. There are no superfluous words, for the master strikes a clean sharp blow, forging his mood all of a single piece, welding your whim to his, and, fusing his sentences, there glows a spirit, a quality of style that bears no affectation; it must not, of all things, become literary, it must be direct, not showing signs of operose polish. It must be writ in the native dialect of the heart.

If it be a risk to write frankly, it is one that gains interest in the same proportion; it makes the game the better sport. But after all, how many letters, so fearfully burned, so carefully hid away, but would in after years seem innocuous? You are seduced by the moment, and your mood seems, and impulses seem, dangerous, incendiary. You grow perfervid in your indiscretion, not knowing that the whole world is stirred by the same recklessness, and that each one is profoundly bored by all save his own yearnings. Not many of our epistles will bear the test of print on their own merit, expurgate them as you will; you need only fear, rather, that the letter will grow dull

even before it reaches its destination. The best of them, moreover, are written in sympathetic ink, and unless your correspondent has the proper reagent at hand, the sheets will be empty or incomprehensible even to him. Answer speedily as you may, too, it will be hard to overtake your correspondent's mood; he has overburdened his mind, precipitated the solution, and is off to another experiment by the time his stamp is affixed. But you must do your best in return; reflect enough of his ray to show him he has shot straight, and then flash your own color back.

There are virtues of omission and commission. It is not enough to answer questions; one must not add the active annoyance of apology to the passive offense of neglect. One must not hint at things untellable; one must give the crisp satisfaction of confidences wholly shared. Who has not received that dash of feminine inconsequence in the sentence, "I have just written you two long letters, and have torn them both up"? What letter could make up for such an exasperation? Your master letter-writer does not fear to stop when he is done, either, and a blank page at the end of the folio does not threaten his conscience.

If one has not the commonplace view of things, and escapes the obvious, it matters little whether one uses

the telescope or the microscope. Deal with the abstract or concrete, as you will discuss philosophy and systems, or gild homely little common things till they shine and twinkle with joy. Indeed, the perfect letter-writer must do both, and change from the intensely subjective to the declaratively objective point of view. He must, as it were, look you in the eye and hold you by the hand.

Two masters whose letters have recently been printed may illustrate these two different phases of expression, though each could do both as well. And this first, from Browning's love letters, describes what the perfect letter should be :

"I persisted in not reading my letter in the presence of my friend. . . . I kept the letter in my hand, and only read it with those sapient ends of the fingers which the mesmerists make so much ado about, and which really did seem to touch a little of what was inside. Not *all*, however, happily for me! or my friend would have seen in my eyes what *they* did not see."

To this the twittering, delightful familiarities of Stevenson :

"Two Sundays ago the sad word was brought that the sow was out again; this time she had brought another in her flight. Moors and I and Fanny were strolling up to the garden, and there by the waterside we saw the black sow looking guilty.

It seemed to me beyond words; but Fanny's *cri du cœur* was delicious. 'G-r-r!' she cried; 'nobody loves you!'

It was the same art in big and little, for each stripped off pretense and boldly revealed his moment's personality.

And yet, and yet, a letter does not depend on any artistic quality or glib facility with words, for its interest. The one test of a letter is that it must bring the writer close to your side. You must fasten your mood on me, so that I shall be you for hours afterward. It sounds easy enough, but it is the most difficult thing in the world, to be one's self. "I long for you, I long for you so much that I thank God upon my knees that you are not here!" There, now, is a letter that promises well, but I dare not quote more of it, for the subject must be seen from another side.

THE CASTE OF THE ARTICULATE

FAIR or unfair though it be, I have come to accept a letter as the final test of the personality of a new acquaintance. Not of his or her intellect or moral worth, perhaps, but the register of that rare power that dominates all attributes — that peculiar aroma, flavor, *timbre* or color which makes some of our friends eternally exceptional. “Who dares classify him and label him, sins against the Holy Ghost; I, for one, think I know him only inasmuch as I refuse to sum him up. I can not find his name in the dictionary; I can not make a map of him; I can not write his epitaph.” So writes Sonia of a friend with such a personality, and you will see by this that Sonia herself is of the Caste of the Articulate.

We are influenced first by sight, then by sound, and, lastly, by the written word. “She spoke, and lo! her loveliness methought she damaged with her tongue!” is the description of many a woman who appeals to the eye alone. And in something the same way many who fascinate us with their glamour while face to face,

shock us by the dreary commonplaceness of their letters.

It would seem that an interesting person must inevitably write an interesting letter—indeed, that should be a part of the definition of the term interesting. But many decent folk are gagged with constraint and self-consciousness, and never seem to get free.

“I wonder,” says Little Sister, “whether these wordless folk may not, after all, really feel much more deeply than we who write?” That is a troublesome question, and in its very nature unanswerable, since the witnesses are dumb. No doubt they feel more simply and unquestioningly, for as soon as a thing is once said its opposite and contradictory side, as true and as necessary, reacts on us. But it seems to me that the expression does not so much depend on any spiritual insight, or even on especial training, as it does on the capacity for being frankly and simply one’s self. That is the only thing necessary to make the humblest person interesting, and yet nothing is so difficult as to be one’s self, in this wild whirling world.

Expression is but another name for revelation. Unless one is willing to expose one’s self like Lady Godiva, or protected only by such beauty and sincerity as hers, one can go but a little way in the direction of

individuality. We must sacrifice our vanity at every turn, show good and bad alike, and laugh at ourselves too. "Would that mine enemy might write a book!" is no insignificant curse, and yet there are tepid colorless authors who might hazard it with safety; no one would ever discover the element of personality.

"After our quarrel I felt as if I had a pebble in my shoe all day," Little Sister once wrote me. Let that be an example of the articulate manner, for by such vivid and homely metaphors she strews her pages. Did she reserve such phrases for her written words, I would feel bound to claim for letter-writing the distinction of being an art in itself, unrelated to any other faculty; but no, she talks in the same way—she is herself every moment. "My temper is violent and sudden, but it soon evaporates," she tells me, "like milk spilt on a hot stove."

The inspiration that impels one so to illustrate an abstract statement with a concrete example, illuminating and convincing, is a spark of the divine fire of personality. This is the *crux* of the articulate caste. An ounce of illustration is worth a pound of proof. Rob poetry of metaphor and it would be but prose; a simile, in verse, is usually merely ornament. The true purpose of tropes, however, is more virile and sustaining;

they should reinforce logic, not decorate it. See how agilely Perilla can compress the whole history of a flirtation into six lines, defying the old saying that "there is nothing so difficult to relight as a dead love":

I thought I saw a stiffened form
 A-lying in its shroud;
 I looked again and saw it was
 The love we once avowed.
 "They told me you were dead!" I cried.
 The corpse sat up and bowed!

When one has a few such acquaintances as these, books are superfluous. Who would read a dead romance when one can have it warm and living, vibrant, human, coming like instalments of a serial story, a perpetual revelation of character! Many pride themselves on their proficiency in matter and many in manner—there are those, even, who boast of mere quantity; and your professional letter-writer is usually cool and calm, if not affected and pretentious. A letter, though, should be impregnate with living fire—it should boil. It is a treat of exceptional human nature. If the sentences be not spontaneous and unstudied the pleasure is lost. One may write fiery nonsense, but one must mean it at the time. One's mind must, as Sonia says, be hospitable, keep open house, and have

the knack of making one's friends at home, to throb with one's own delights and despairs. One must give every mood open-handed, and mention nothing one may not say outright with gusto. But it is not every one who can "bathe in rich, young feeling, and steep at day-dawning in green bedewed grasses" like my little Sonia. If I were dead she could still strike sparks out of me with her letters.

"Oh, if you could only see my new hat! I've been sitting in fetish worship half the evening, and I'll never dare tell how much I paid for it. You never need be good-looking under such a hat as that, for no one will ever see you!" Does not this quotation bring Little Sister very near to you, and make her very human and real? Ah, Little Sister is not afraid to be herself! She knows that she can do nothing better. "It's a terrible handy thing to have a smashing adjective in your pocket," she confesses. Little Sister has a good aim, too; she always hits my heart. And yet she acknowledges that "there are days when letters are blankly impossible."

Such friends write the kind of letters that one keeps always, the kind that can be re-read without skipping. It is their own talk, their own lives, their own selves

put up like fruit preserves of various flavors, moods and colors, warranted not to turn or spoil.

And as for the gagged wordless folk, it is my opinion that too much sensibility has been accredited to them. To any rich exotic nature expression must come as a demand not to be refused. It is feeling bubbling over into words. Other souls are compressed and silent; they have the possibilities of the bud—something warm and inspiring may at any time make them expand and free them from the constraint—but there is not much perfume until the flower blooms.

THE TYRANNY OF THE LARES

NO, I have never been tainted with a mania for collecting. It has never particularly interested me, when I already happened to have two of a kind, to possess a third. I prefer things to be different rather than alike, and the few treasures I really care for I like for themselves alone, and not because they are one of a family, set or series.

But there are so few things to be envious of, even then! After one's necessities are provided for, there are not many objects worth possessing, and fewer still worth the struggle of collecting. Acquisition seems to rob most things of their intrinsic value, of the extreme desirability they seemed to possess; and yet it does not follow that the practise of collecting is not worth while. It is worth while for itself, but not for the things collected. It is like hunting. The enjoyment, to your true sportsman, does not depend entirely on the game that is bagged. If the hunter went out solely for the purpose of obtaining food he would better go to the nearest poulterer.

We have a habit of associating the idea of pleasure

with the possession of certain objects, and we fancy such pleasure is permanent. But in nine cases out of ten the enjoyment is effervescent, and the thing must be gazed at, touched and admired while the charm is new. Then only can one feel the sharp joy of possession, and, even though its value remain as an object of art, we must after that enjoy it impersonally; its delight must be shared with other spectators. As far as the satisfaction of ownership is concerned the thing is dead for us, and though we would not give it up, our greed gilds it but cheaply, after all.

Of all things, pictures are most commonly regarded as giving pleasure. A painting is universally accepted as a desirable possession of more or less value, according to personal appreciation. In fact, most men would say that a poor picture is better than none, since one of its recognized functions is to fill a space on the wall. And yet how few pictures are looked at once a day, or once a week. How many persons accept them only as decoration, as spots on the wall, and pass them by, in their familiarity, as unworthy of especial notice! One insults daily by his neglect the portrait of a friend whom one would never "cut" on the street.

But the collection of a multitude of things is no

great oppression if one is permanently installed; they pad out the comforts of life, they create "atmosphere"; they fill up spaces in the house as small talk fills up spaces in conversation. The first prospect of moving, however, brings this horde of stupid, useless, dead things to life, and they appear in their proper guise to strike terror into the heart of the owner. Pictures that have never been regarded, curiosities that are only curious, books that no longer feed the brain, and the thousand little knickknacks that accumulate in one's domicile and multiply like parasites—all the flotsam and jetsam of housekeeping must be individually attended to, and rejected or preserved piecemeal.

But that exciting decision! It is not till one has actually had the courage to destroy some once prized possession that one feels the first inspiring thrill of emancipation. Before, the thing owned you; it had to be protected in its useless life, kept intact with care and attention. You were pledged to forestall dust, rust and pillage. If you yourself selected it, it stood as a tangible evidence of your culture, an ornament endorsed as art. The thing forbade growth of taste or judgment, it became a changeless reproach. If it were a gift, it ruled you with a subtle tyranny, compelling your hypocrisy, enslaving you by chains of

your very good nature. But if you do not falter, in one exquisite pang you are freed. The Thing is destroyed! Not given away, not hidden or disguised, but murdered outright. It is your sublime duty to yourself that demands the sacrifice.

These horrid monsters once put out of your life, and all necessity for their care annulled, you have so much more space for the few things whose quality remains permanent. You will guard the entrance to your domicile and jealously examine the qualifications of every article admitted. You will ask: "Is it absolutely necessary?" If so, then let it be as beautiful as possible, putting into its perfection of design the expense and care formerly bestowed on a dozen trifles. You will use gold instead of silver, linen instead of cotton, ivory in the place of celluloid; in short, whatever you use intimately and continually, whatever has a definite plausible excuse for existence, should be so beautiful that there is no need for objects which are merely ornamental.

It was so before machinery made everything possible, common and cheap; it has been so with every primitive civilization. To the unspoiled peasant, to all of sane and simple mind, ornaments have, in themselves, no reason for being. Pictures are unnecessary, because

the true craftsman so elaborates and develops the constructive lines of his architecture that the decoration is organic and inherent. The many household utensils, vessels and implements of daily use were so appropriately formed, so graceful and elegant in their simplicity, so cunning of line, so quaint of form and pleasant of color, that they were objects of art, and there was no need for the extraneous display of meaningless adornment.

Once you are possessed with this idea you will suddenly become aware of the tyranny of things, and you will begin to dread becoming a slave to mere possessions. You may still enjoy and admire the possessions of others, but the ineffable bore of ownership will keep you content. The responsibility of proprietorship will strike you with terror, gifts will appal you, the opportunity of ridding yourself of one more unnecessary thing will be welcomed as another stroke for freedom. Your friends' houses will become your museums, and they the altruistic custodians, allowing you the unalloyed sweets of appreciation with none of the bitter responsibilities of possession.

For you, if you are of my kind, and would be free to fly light, flitting, gipsy fashion, wherever and whenever the whim calls, must not be anchored to an estab-

lishment. We must know and love our few possessions as a father knows his children. We must be able to pack them all in one box and follow them foot-loose. This is the new order of Friars Minor, modern Paulists who have renounced the possession of things, and by that vow of disinheritance, parting with the paltry delights of monopoly, have been given the roving privilege of the world!

COSTUME AND CUSTOM

A FRIEND of mine has reduced his habit of dress to a system. Dressing has long been known to be a fine art, but this enthusiast's endeavor has been to make it a science as well—to give his theories practical application to the routine of daily life. To do this, he has given his coats and jackets all Anglo-Saxon names. His frock is called Albert, for instance, his morning coat Cedric, a gray tweed jacket, William, and so on. His waistcoats masquerade under more poetic pseudonyms. A white piqué is known as Reginald, a spotted cashmere is Montmorency, and I have seen this eccentric in a wonderful plaid vest hight Roulhac. Family names distinguish his trousers and pantaloons. I need only mention such remarkable *aliases* as Braghampton, a striped cheviot garment, and a pair of tennis flannels denominated Smithers. His terminology includes also appellations by which he describes his neckwear—simple prefixes, such as “de” or “von” or “Mac” or “Fitz,” modifying the name of the waistcoat, and titles for his hats,

varying from a simple "Sir" for a brown bowler to "Prince" for a silk topper of the season's block.

Now, my mythical friend is not such a fool as you might think by this description of his mania, for he is moved to this fantastic procedure by a psychological theory. The gentleman is a private, if not a public, benefactor, the joy of his friends and delight of his whole acquaintance, for, never in the course of their experience, has he ever appeared twice in exactly the same costume. It may differ from some previous habilitation only by the tint of his gloves, but the change is there with its subtle suggestion of newness. Indeed, this sartorial dilettante prides himself, not so much on the fact that his raiment is never duplicated in combination, as that the changes are so slight as not to be noticed without careful analysis. His maxim is that clothes should not call attention to themselves either by their splendor or their variety, but that the effect should be on the emotions rather than on the eye. He holds that it should never be particularly noticed whether a man dresses much or dresses well, but that the impression should be of an immortal freshness, sustaining the confidence of his friends that his garb shall have a pleasing note of composition.

It is to accomplish this that he has adopted the

mnemonic system by which to remember his changing combinations. He has but to say to his valet: "Muggins, this morning you may introduce Earl Edgar von Courtenay Blenkinsopp," and his man, familiar with the nomenclature of the wardrobe, will, after his master has been bathed, shaved and breakfasted, clothe the artist accordingly in Panama hat, sack coat, cheerful fawn waistcoat, a tender heliotrope scarf and pin-check trousers. Or perhaps, looking over the calendar, the man may announce that this fantastic Earl has already appeared at the club, in which case a manipulation of the tie or waistcoat changes von Courtenay to O'Anstruther. The Earl must not, according to the rules, appear twice in his full complement of costume. His existence is but for a day, but Anstruther, the merry corduroy vest, may become a part of many personalities.

So much for my friend Rigamarole, who does, if you like, carry his principles to an extreme; but surely we owe it to our friends that our clothes shall please. It is as necessary as that we should have clean faces and proper nails. But, more than this, we owe it to ourselves that we shall not be known by any hackneyed, unvarying garb. It need not be taken for

granted that we shall wear brown or blue, we should not become identified with a special shape of collar. Servants must wear a prescribed livery, priests must always appear clad in the cloth of their office, and the soldier must be content with and proud of his uniform, but free men are not forced to inflict a permanent visual impression on their fellows. He must follow the habit and style of the day, be of his own class and period, and yet, besides, if he can, be himself always characteristic, while always presenting a novel aspect. It is as necessary for a man as for a woman, and, though the elements which he may combine are fewer, they are capable of a certain permutative effect.

Our time is cursed more than any other has been, perhaps, with hard and fast rules for men's costume; and of all clothing, evening dress, in which, in the old days, was granted the greatest freedom of choice, is now subject to the most rigid prescription. We must all appear like waiters at dinner, but daylight allows tiny licenses. Perhaps our garments are always darkest just before dawn, and the new century may emancipate men's personal taste. So far, at least, we may go: a frock coat does not compel a tie of any particular color, and a morning coat does not invariably for-

bid a certain subdued animation in the way of waistcoats. We may already choose between at least three styles of collar and yet be received at five o'clock, and colored shirts are winning a hard fight to oust the white linen that has reigned for more than half a hundred years. Even after dinner soft silk and linen shirts prophesy eventual emancipation. It takes no great wealth to take advantage of these minor opportunities, nor need one be pronounced a fop if one uses one's chances well. He is safest who wears only what the best tailor has advised every other of his customers, but who cares for a tailor's model? Who cares, I might add, to be safe? There is safety in numbers, but who ever remembers or cares for the victims of such commonplace discretion? We are men, not mice; why should our coats be all of the same fashionable hue and of the same length of tail?

But the times are changing, and we may look forward with confident hope to the renascence of color. Already we may see the signs of the change that is approaching. God forbid that men should become the dandies of the Regency, that we should ever ape the incredible or go without pockets, but we may pray heartily for the wedding of Art and Reason. Let us pray we shall no more wear cylinders or cap our

skulls with tight-fitting boxes! Meanwhile, I fear I must buy another necktie, for my only one is well worn out. And Celestine swears she can recognize that blue serge suit of mine clear across the Park!

OLD FRIENDS AND NEW

OLD FRIENDS, we say, are best, when some sudden disillusionment shakes our faith in a new comrade. So indeed they are, yet I count many newly-made ties as stronger than those of my youth. "Keep close and hold my hand; I am afraid, for an old friend is coming!" Celestine once whispered to me while our love was young. How well I understood her panic! She was swung by the conflicting emotions of loyalty and oppression; her old friend had rights, but her new friend had privileges. With me, a stranger, she was frankly herself; with him, a familiar, she must be what he expected of her.

How shall we arrange the order of precedence for the late and early comers into our hearts? How shall we adjudicate their conflicting claims? That is the problem to be answered by every one who lives widely, and who would not have writ upon his gravestone: "He made more friends than he could keep!" Were one content to pass from flower to flower it would be easy enough, but rather would I gather a full, fragrant and harmonious bouquet for my delight.

To one sensitively loyal, each new friend must at first sight seem to come as a thief, come to steal a fragment of his heart from its rightful owner. We say, "Make many acquaintances but few friends," we swear undying devotion, and we promise to write every week; but, if we practise this reserve, this fastidious partiality and exclusive attention, how shall we grow and increase in worth, and how shall the Brotherhood of Man be brought about?

We may think that each friend has his own place and is unique, satisfying some especial part of our nature; each to be kept separate in his niche, the saint to whom we turn for sympathy in those matters wherein we have vowed him our confidences. We may satisfy our consciences by giving to each the same number of candles, and by a religious celebration of each Saint's day, keeping the calendar of our devotions independent and exclusive; but this method does not make for growth. It is our duty to help knit society together, to modify extremes, to transmit and transform affection. Surely there is love enough for all, and the more we give the more we shall have to give to our friends, whether they be old or new.

Friendship is, however, a matter of caste. With just as many as share our point of view or can under-

stand it, who laugh at the things we laugh at, who are tempted by our temptations and sin our sins, can we have a divine fellowship. Through these to others outside of our ken, through friend to friend's friend the tie passes that shall bind the whole world together at last.

Our set of friends is a solar system, a cluster of planets, that, revolving about us, moves with the same trend through space and time. Each member of the fraternity has its own aphelion and perihelion, occultation and transit. Whether they are visible or invisible, we must be sure that each in due season will return to the same relative position and exert the same attraction, answering the law of gravity that in true friendship keeps them in their orbits about us. But the circles interlace, and in that is the possibility of keeping the unity of our constellation of friends. Were the same comrades to accompany us unceasingly we could not develop. There must be an intricate complication of actions and reactions, and we must be affected by each in turn and in combination.

What is a parting from a friend but a departure in quest of new experience? Each fresh meeting, therefore, should be the sharing of the fruits that both have gathered, that each may profit by the contribution. If

you tell me of a book you have read, I am amused and profited by the knowledge you bring me; shall I not be grateful to you for what you bring from an interesting person? If every new friend contributes to our development and enriches us by his personality, not only are we the better for it ourselves, but more worthwhile to one another. It is not you as you are whom I love best, but you as you shall be when, in due time, you have come to your perfect stature; wherefore I shall not begrudge the loan of you to those who have set you on the way.

Though we may hold one friend paramount over all others, and admit him to every phase of intimacy, there are minor confidences that are often most possible with an entire stranger. Were we to meet a man of the sixteenth century, what could we not tell such an impersonal questioner! What would we care for the little mortifications that come between even the best of friends? We could confess faults and embarrassments without shame, we could share every hope and doubt without fear, for he would regard us without bias or prejudice. He could scourge us with no whip of conventional morality, and he would be able to judge any action of itself, hampered by no code or creed.

We had a game once, my sister and I, in which we agreed to look at each other suddenly, newly, as if we had never met before. Frequently we were able to catch a novel phase of character, and our subconscious self, freed from the servitude of custom, bounded in a new emotion. Could we, in this way, at times regard our friends, how much we might learn! We fall into the habit of seeing what we look for, and we compel old friends to live up to the preconception. Why not look at them, occasionally, as strangers to be studied and learned? There are two variable quantities in the equation of friendship, Yourself and Myself. Our relation is never fixed; it is alive and changing from hour to hour. There is no such thing as an unalterable friendship, for both parties to the affair are moving at different speeds, first one and then the other ahead, giving a hand to be helped on and reaching back to assist. Might we not, indeed, reverse the previous experiment and regard any stranger as a blood relative, assuming a fraternity of interest? We need only to be honest and kind.

By these two processes we may keep old friends and make new ones; and our conscience shall acquit us of disloyalty. When one enlarges one's establishment, one does not decrease either the wages or the duties

of the servants before employed. The new members of the household have new functions. More is given and more is received. But it is not so much that one must give more as that one should give wisely and economically, we must be generous in quality rather than in quantity; for, though there is love enough to go round for all, there is not time enough for most of us. We must clasp hands, give the message and pass on, trusting to meet again on the journey, and come to the same inn at nightfall.

A DEFENSE OF SLANG

COULD Shakespeare come to Chicago and listen curiously to "the man in the street," he would find himself more at home than in London. In the mouths of messenger boys and clerks he would find the English language used with all the freedom of unexpected metaphor and the plastic suggestive diction that was the privilege of the Elizabethan dramatists; he would say, no doubt, that he had found a nation of poets. There was hardly any such thing as slang in his day, for no graphic trope was too virile or uncommon for acceptance, if its meaning were patent. His own heroes (and heroines, too, for Rosalind's talk was as forcible in figures of speech as any modern American's) often spoke what corresponds to the slang of to-day.

The word, indeed, needs precise definition before we condemn all unconventional talk with opprobrium. Slang has been called "poetry in the rough," and it is not all coarse or vulgar. There is a prosaic as well as a poetic license. The man in the street calls a

charming girl, for instance, a "daisy" or a "peach." Surely this is not inelegant, and such a reference will be understood a century hence without a foot-note. Slang, to prove adjuvant to our speech, which is growing more and more rigid and conventional, should be terse; it should make for force and clarity, without any sacrifice of beauty. Still, manner should befit matter; the American "dude" was, perhaps, no more unpleasant a word than the emasculated fop it described. The English "bounder" is too useful an appellation to do without in London, and, were that meretricious creature of pretense and fancy waistcoat more common in the United States, the term would be welcomed to American slang with enthusiasm. New York, alas, has already produced "cads," but no Yankee school would ever tolerate a "fag."

The mere substitution of a single synonymous term, however, is not characteristic of American slang. Your Chicago messenger boy coins metaphorical phrases with the facility of a primitive savage. A figure of speech once started and come into popular acceptance changes from day to day by paraphrase, and, as long as a trace of the original significance is apparent, the personal variation is comprehensible, not only to the masses, but generally to those whose purism eschews

the use of common talk. Thus, to give "the glassy eye" became the colloquial equivalent of receiving a cool reception. The man on the street, inventive and jocose, does not stop at this. At his caprice it becomes giving "the frozen face" or even "the marble heart." In the same way one may hear a garrulous person spoken of as "talking to beat the band," an obvious metaphor; or, later, "to beat the cars."

The only parallel to this in England is the "rhyming slang" of the costers, and the thieves' "patter." There a railway guard may be facetiously termed a "Christmas card," and then abbreviated to "card" alone, thence to permutations not easily traced. But the English slang that is, for the most part, confined to the "masses," is an incomprehensible jargon to all else save those who make an especial study of the subject. One may sit behind a bus driver from the Bank to Fulham, and understand hardly a sentence of his colloquies and gibes at the passing fraternity, but though the language of the trolley conductor of Chicago is as racy and spirited, it needs less translation. The American will, it is true, be enigmatic at times; you must put two and two together. You must reduce his trope to its lowest terms, but common sense will simplify it. It is not an empirical, arbitrary wit depending

on a music-hall song for its origin. I was riding on a Broadway car one day when a semi-intoxicated individual got on, and muttered unintelligibly, "Put me off at Brphclwknd Street, please." I turned to the conductor and asked, "What did he want?" The official smiled. "You can search me!" he said, in denial of any possession of apprehension.

Slang in America, then, is expression on trial; if it fits a hitherto unfurnished want it achieves a certain acceptance. But it is a frothy compound, and the bubbles break when the necessity of the hour is past, so that much of it is evanescent. Some of the older inventions remain, such as "bunco" and "lynch" and "chestnut," but whole phrases lose their snap like uncorked champagne, though they give their stimulant at the proper timely moment. Like the eggs of the codfish, one survives and matures, while a million perish. The "observed of all observers" (Ophelia's delicate slang, observe) was, yesterday, in New York, "the main guy," a term whose appositeness would be easily understood in London, where the fall of the Gunpowder Plot is still celebrated. Later, in Chicago, according to George Ade, a modern authority, it became the "main squeeze," and further permutation rendered the phrase useless. It is this facility of change that makes

most slang spoil in crossing the Atlantic. On the other side, English slang is of so esoteric an origin and reference, that no Yankee can translate or adopt it. It is drop-forged and rigid, an empiric use of words to express humor. What Englishman, indeed, could trace the derivation of "balmy on the crumpet" as meaning what the American would term "dotty" or "bughouse," unless he was actually present at the music-hall where it was first invented? How account for the "nut?"

We all have at least three native languages to learn—the colloquial, the literary prose, and the separate vocabulary of poetry. In America slang makes a fourth, and it has come to be that we feel it as incongruous to use slang on the printed page as it is to use "said he" or "she replied with a smile" in conversation, and, except for a few poets, such words as "haply," "welkin," or "beauteous" in prose. Yet Stevenson himself, the purist who avoids foreign words, uses Scotch which nearly approaches slang, for there is little difference between words of an unwritten dialect and slang, such as "scrannel" and "widdershins"; while Wilkie Collins writes "wyte," "wanion," "kittle," "gar," and "collop" in with English sentences, as doubtless many questionable words of to-day will be honored in the future.

Slang, the illegitimate sister of Poetry, makes with her a common cause against the utilitarian economy of Prose. Both stand for lavish luxuriance in trope and involution, for floration and adornment of thought. It is their boast to make two words grow where but one grew before. Both garb themselves in metaphor, and the only complaint of the captious can be that whereas Poetry follows the accepted style, Slang dresses her thought to suit herself in fantastic and bizarre caprices—that her whims are unstable and too often in bad taste.

But this odium given to slang by superficial minds is undeserved. In other days, before the language was crystallized into the verbiage and idiom of the doctrinaire, prose, too, was untrammelled. A cursory glance at the Elizabethan poets discloses a kinship with the rebellious fancies of our modern colloquial talk. For gargarism, scarab, quodling, puck-fist, scroyle, foist, pumpion, trindle-tale, comroque, pigsbones and ding-dong, we may now read chump, scab, chaw, yap, fake, bloke, pal, bad-actor and so on. "She's a delicate dab-chick!" says Ben Jonson; "she had all the component parts of a peach," says George Ade.

It will be seen that slang has two characteristics—

humor and force. Brevity is not always the soul of wit, for to-day we find amusement in the euphemisms that, in the sixteenth century, were taken in all seriousness. The circumlocutions will drop speedily out of use, but the more apt and adequate neologisms tend to improve literary style. For every hundred times slang attributes a new meaning to an old word, it creates once or twice a new word for an old meaning. Many hybrids will grow, some flower and a few seed. So it is with slang.

There is a "gentleman's slang," as Thackeray said, and there is the impossible kind; but of the bulk of the American product, the worst to be said of it usually is that it is homely and extravagant. None the less it is a picturesque element that spices the language with enthusiasm. It is antiseptic and prevents the decay of virility. Literary style is but an individual, glorified slang. It is not impossible for the artist; it went to its extreme in the abandon of Ben Jonson, Webster and Beaumont and Fletcher, but, as your Cockney would say, "It does take a bit of doin'" nowadays.

THE CHARMS OF IMPERFECTION

FOR a long time I held a stubborn belief that I should admire and aim at perfection. I admitted its impossibility, of course; I attributed my friends' failure to achieve it as a charming evidence of their humanity, but it seemed to me to be a thing most properly to be desired. And yet, on thinking it over, I was often astonished by the discovery that most of my delights were caused by a divergence from this ideal. "A sweete disorder in the dress kindleth in cloathes a wantonness!"

Now, is this because I am naturally perverse, and enjoy the bizarre, the unique and the grotesque? Is it because of my frailty that I take a dear delight in signs of our common humanity, in the petty faults and foibles of the world? Or is it because I have misinterpreted this ideal of perfection, and have thought it necessary or proper to worship a conventional criterion? Celestine and I have been puckering our brows for a week over the problem!

We have learned, after a quarter of a century's ex-

perience with the turning lathe and fret saw, to turn back for lasting joy to hand-made work. We delight in the minor irregularities of a carving, for instance, recognizing that behind that slip of the tool there was a man at work; a man with a soul, striving for expression. The dreary methodical uniformity of machine-made decoration and furniture wearies our new enlightened taste. Mathematical accuracy and "spirit" seem to be mutually exclusive, and we have been taught by the modern Esthetic almost to regard amateurishness as a sure proof of sincerity. We can not associate the abandon and naïf enthusiasm of the pre-Raphaelites with the technical proficiency of the later Renaissance, and Botticelli stands, not only for the spirit dominating and shining through the substance but, in a way, for the incompatibility of the perfect idealization with perfect execution. And yet this conflict troubles us. We feel that the two should be wedded, so that the legitimate offspring might be perfection; but when perfect technique is attained, as in a Japanese carving, the result is almost as devoid of human feeling and warmth as a machine-made product.

We feel this instinctive choice of irregularity wherever we turn—wherever, that is, we have to do with humanity or human achievement. We do not, it is

true, delight in the flaw in the diamond, but elsewhere we are in perpetual conflict with nature, whose sole object seems to be the obliteration of extremes and the ultimate establishment of a happy medium of uniformity. We find perfection cold and lifeless in the human face. I doubt if a woman has ever been loved for an absolute regularity of feature; but how many, like little Celestine, who acknowledges herself that her nose is too crooked, her eyes too hazel and her mouth too large, are bewilderingly charming on that very account! These features go to make up an expression, which, if it is not perfect, is certainly not to be accounted for by merely adding up the items. It is a case where the whole is greater than the sum of all its parts. We admire the anatomy and poise of the Greek statues, but they are not humanly interesting. Indeed, they were never meant to be, for they are divinities, and the symbols of an inaccessible perfection.

Still, while we speak of certain faults as being adorable (notably feminine weaknesses), while we make the trite remark anent a man's "one redeeming vice," while we shrink from natures too chaste, too aloof from human temptation, too uncompromising, yet we must feel a pang of conscience. We are not living up to our ideals. Is it the mere reaction from

the impositions of conventional morality? I think not. It is a miscomprehension of the term perfection.

The Buddhist believes in a process of spiritual evolution that, tending ever toward perfection, finally reaches the state of Nirvana, where the individual soul is merged into the Infinite. How can it be differentiated from the universal spirit if it has attained all the attributes of divinity? And that idea seems to be the basis of our mistaken worship of perfection—a Nirvana where each thing, being absolutely perfect, loses every distinguishing mark of character. But is not our Christian, or even the Pagan ideal higher than this? For even the Greek gods, cold and exquisite as they were, had each his individuality, his character, his separate function. Our conception of Heaven, if it is ever formulated nowadays, has this differentiation of individuality strongly accented; though the most orthodox may insist that the spirits of the blessed are sanctified with perfection, yet he does not hold it as a necessary dogma that they are therefore all alike, and recast in a common mold. He still dares believe in that infinite variety which Nature has taught us persists throughout the universe.

This is the fundamental difference between the Oriental and the Occidental point of view. We moderns

stand for the supremacy of character, an ineradicable distinction between human beings which evolution and growth does not diminish, but develops. We believe, you and I, that in a million eons we shall be as different one from the other as we are now; that faults may be eradicated, weaknesses lose their hold, but that our best parts will increase in virtue, not approaching some theoretical standard, but always and forever nearing that standard which is set for ourselves.

We have grown out of our admiration for the "copper-plate hand" in penmanship; we recognize the fact now, that we need not so much follow the specimens in the copy-book as to make the best of what is distinctive in our own style of writing. And this is a type of what our conception of perfection, perhaps, should be. Everything should be significant of character, should supplement it, translate it, explain it. In the Japanese prints you will find almost every face with the same meaningless expression, every feature calm, disguising every symptom of individuality. It is the Oriental pose, the Oriental ideal just mentioned. It is not considered proper to express either joy or sorrow, and the perfection of poise is a sublime indifference.

And I have a final idea that may, to a more subtle student of Esthetic, seem suggestive. In the beautiful parabola described by the mounting and descending sky-rocket the upward and downward path are never quite parallel. The stick does not drop vertically although it continually approaches that direction. In other words, the curve, constantly approaching a straight line, is beautiful despite, and, indeed, perhaps *because* it never quite attains that rectilinear perfection and keeps its distinctive character to the end. It is beautiful in its whole progress, for that path defines the curve of the parabola.

“THE PLAY’S THE THING”

“**W**OULD you rather see a good play performed by poor actors, or a poor play done by good actors?” asked Celestine.

As a professor of the romantic view of life and a “ghost-seer,” there is but one answer to the question. “The play’s the thing!” Acting is at best a secondary art—an art, that is, of interpretation, though we as critics judge it of itself alone. But, to an idealist, no play ever is, or can be, perfectly performed. As we accept the conventions of stage carpentry, impossible skies, flat trees, “property” rocks, misfit costumes and tinsel ornament, so we must gloss over the imperfections of the players, and accept their struttings and mouthings as the fantastic accessories of stageland. No actor that ever lived ever acted throughout a whole drama as a sane human being would act. We are used to thinking the contrary, but the compression of time and space prevents verisimilitude. A play is not supposed to simulate life except by an established convention. Every art has its medium and

its limitation. It is indeed a limitation that makes art possible. In the drama the limitation is the use of the time element.

The play's the thing—we may read it from the book or have it recited before the footlights, but the lasting delight is the charm of plot that, with the frail assistance of the actor, finds its way to our emotions. A good play done by poor actors, then, for me, if I must choose between the two evils.

Fancy creates; imagination constructs. The child, sporting ingenuously with both these powers, dwells in a world of his own, either induced by his mastering fiat, or remodeled nearer to his heart's desire from the rags and fragments at hand. In his toy theater alone is the perfect play produced, for there imagination is stage manager, and has the hosts of Wonderland in the cast. The child is the only perfect romanticist. He has the keen fresh eye on nature; all is play, and the critical faculty is not yet aroused. So in a way, too, was all primitive drama. The audience at Shakespearean plays heard but noble poesies, saw but a virile dream made partly visible, like a ghost beckoning away their thoughts. So, even to-day, is the Chinese theater, with its hundreds of arbitrary conventions, its lack of scenery and its artificial eloquence.

The veriest coolie knows that a painted face (a white nose, stripes and crosses on the cheeks) does but portray a masked intention, as if the actor bore a placard writ with the word "Villain." Forthwith, all the rest is faery. The player does but lightly guide the rein, and Pegasus soars free.

So no play can be perfectly performed. We have created an artificial standard of realism, and we say that Bernhardt, Duse and Coquelin portray emotion with consummate art. It has been agreed by authorities on Esthetic that simulated passion surpasses in suggestive power real emotion. The actor must not "lose himself in his part"—he must maintain the objective relation. None the less, however, must we, as audience, supply imagination to extend the play from art to life. From a romantic point of view, such devotion to realism is unnecessary. We are swayed by the wildest absurdities of melodrama, alike false to life and false to art, and we accept the operas of Wagner, with all their pasteboard dragons and bull-necked heroes belching forth technique, as impressive stimuli to the imagination. Even through such crude means, uplifted either by passionate brotherhood or upon the wings of song, we are wafted far and fast. The play, oh! the play's the thing!

For see! If you prefer the bad play performed by the good actors, why not go to life itself? What else, indeed, *is* life? It was the old Duke in Lewis Carroll's *Silvie and Bruno* who first pointed this out. All the world's a stage where are performed the worst of badly constructed plays—plays with neither unity nor sequence nor climax, but performed with absolute perfection. Why waste your time cursing the Adelphi, when, like the Duke, you can see the perfect art of the street? The railway porter's dialect is still convincing. The fat woman with her screaming children may enter at any minute, with her touches of wonderful realism. If you go to the theater for acting you go to the wrong place! Watch the Pont Neuf for the despairing suicide, lurk in Whitechapel, visit in Mayfair, coquette with a Spaniard's sweetheart, or rob a Jew, strike an Englishman, love an American girl, flirt with a French countess, or watch a Samoan beauty at the salt pools catching fish; but try not to find perfect acting behind a row of foot-lights!

But if, after all, the play's the thing, it is as much a mistake to look for real drama on the street. There everything is incomplete, and, for the satisfaction of our esthetic sense, we require the threads to be brought

together, and the pattern developed, the knots tied. Our contemplation of life is usually analytic; we delight in discovering motives, elementary passions, traits of character and human nature. Our joy in art, on the other hand, arises from synthesis; we love to see effect follow cause, and events march logically, passions work themselves out, the triumph of virtue and justice. Life, as we see it, is a series of photographs. The drama presents these successively as in a biograph, with all the insignificant intermediary glimpses removed. We hunger for the finished story, the poem with the envoy. For this reason we have the drama and the novel.

And now Celestine asks me, "Would you rather read a good story poorly written than a poor story well written?"

The question is as fair as the other, though not quite in the same case. We may agree that acting is a secondary art, but literature has more dignified claims to consideration. Here we are contemplating a wedding of two arts, not the employment of one by another. One might as well say, then, "Would you rather see a good man married to a bad woman or the reverse?" It is the critic who attempts always to divorce the two.

Yet, as in almost all marriage, where two arts work together one is usually the more important. You may have your preferences, but the selection of that art which embodies an idea, rather than the one which aims at an interpretation, marks the romanticist's point of view. One art must be masculine, creative, and the other feminine and adorning. The glory of the one is strength, of the other beauty. For me, then, the manly choice. Give me the good story badly told, the fine song poorly sung, the virile design clumsily carved, rather than the opposite cases. The necessity of such a choice is not a mere whim of Celestine's; it is a problem we are forced to confront every day. We must take sides. It is not often, even from the Philistine's point of view, that we have the good thing well done, while the poor thing badly done we have everywhere. Between these limits of perfection and hopelessness, then, lies our every-day world of art, and there continually we must make our choice.

If we could deal with abstractions, there would be no question at all, and undoubtedly we would all prefer to enjoy the disincarnate ideal rather than any incomplete embodiment, no matter how praiseworthy the presentment. But few of us are good enough musicians to hear the music in our mind's ear when

we look over the score of an opera; few of us can dream whole romances like Dumas, without putting pen to paper; few, even, can long remember the blended glories of a sunset. We must have some tangible sign to lure back memory and imagination, and if we recognize the fact that such representations are symbols merely, conventions without intrinsic value as art, then we have the eyes of the child and the romantic view of life.

And lastly, Celestine leaned to me in her green kimono and said, "Would you rather see a pretty girl in an ugly gown, or an ugly girl in a pretty gown?" Ah, one does not need to hold the romantic view of life to answer that question!

LIVING ALONE

I HAVE lived so long alone now, that it seems almost as if there were two of me—one who goes out to see friends, transacts business and buys things, and one who returns, dons more comfortable raiment, lights a pipe and dreams. One the world knows, the other no one knows but the flies on the wall.

I keep no pets, since these would enforce my keeping regular hours; the only familiars I have, therefore, are my clock, my fire and my candles, and how companionable these may become one does not know who does not live alone. They owe me the debt of life, and repay it each in its own way, faithfully and apparently willingly. I have a lamp, too; but a lamp is a dull thing, especially when half-filled, and this one bores me. I might count my typewriter, also, but she is too strenuous, and she makes me too impatient by her inability to spell. Besides, the clock, fire and candles may, with no great stretch of the imagination, be readily conceived to have volition, and, once started, they contribute not a little to relieving the tedium of living alone.

My clock is always the same; it has no surprises. It may go a bit fast or slow, but it has a maddeningly accurate conscience, and its fidelity in ringing the eight-o'clock alarm proves it inhuman. Still, it lives and moves, beating a sober accompaniment to my thoughts. Altogether, it is not unlike a faithful conscientious servant, never obtrusive, always punctual and obedient, but with an unremitting devotion to orders that is at times exasperating. Many a man has stood in fear and shame of his valet, and so I look askance furtively with a suppressed curse when the hands point to my bath, my luncheon, or my sortie into town. It would be a relief, sometimes, if my clock stopped, were I not sure that it would be my fault.

But my fire is more feminine, full of moods and whims, ardent, domestic and inspiring. Now a fire, like a woman, should be something more than beautiful, though in many houses the hearth is a mere accessory. It should have other uses than to provide mere warmth, though this is often its sole reason for being. Nor should it be a mere culinary necessity, though I have known open fires to be kindled for that alone, and treated as domestic servants. In my house the fire has all these functions and more, for it is my friend and has consoled many lonely moments. It is

a mistress, full of unexpected fancies and vagaries. It has, too, a more sacred quality, for it is an altar where I burn the incense of memory and sacrifice to the gods of the future. It is both human and divine, a tool and symbol at once.

No one, I think, can know how much of all this a fire can be, who has not himself laid, lighted and kindled and coaxed it, who has not utilized its services and accepted its consolations. My fire is, however, often a jealous mistress. She warms me and makes my heart glad, but I dare not leave her side on a wintry day. I must keep well within bounds, hold her hand or be chilled. It is but little urging I need! I pull up my couch, take pencil and paper, and she twinkles and purrs by my side, casting flickering glances at me as I work.

Not till the flames die down and the coals glow soberly red do I find the more practical pleasures of friendship and housewifely service. Now my fire plays the part of cook, and, in her proper sphere, outdoes every stove or range ever lighted. A little duck laid gently across the grate, the kettle whistling with steam, and the coffee-pot ready—what bachelor was ever attended by more charming handmaiden than I by my little open fire? She will heat an iron or shay-

ing-water as gracefully, too, waiting on me with a jocund willingness. No servant could be so companionable. Still, she must be humored as one must always humor a woman. Try to drive her, or make her feel that she is but a slave, and you shall see how quickly she resents it. There is a psychological moment for broiling on an open fire, and postponement is fatal. It takes a world of petting and poking to soothe her caprice when she is in a blazing temper, but remember her sex, and she melts in a glow like a mollified child.

Kindling and lighting my fire is a ritual. I can not go about it thoughtlessly or without excitement. The birth of the first curling flame inspires me, for the heart becomes an altar sacred to the household gods. If the day offers the least plausible pretext for a fire, I light one and sit down in worship. How I resent a warm morning, when economy struggles with desire! Luckily my studio is at the north of the house, and, no matter if the sun is warm abroad, there is a cool corner waiting where a fire needs no apology. Toward noon the sun creeps in and puts out the flames, but all the morning I enjoy the blaze.

In the evening the fire becomes absolutely necessary, and provides both heat and light, giving a new life of its own to the darkness of the room. Then I be-

come a Parsee, put on my sacerdotal robes (for such lonely priestcraft requires costume), and fall into a reverie. For my sacrifices, old letters feed the flames. They say that coal, in burning, gives back the stored sunlight of past ages. What lost fires burn, then, when love-letters go up in smoke to illumine for one brief, last instant the shadows of memory!

My candles partake of the nature of both clock and fire. They are to be depended on, when let alone, to burn just six hours, marking the time like the ticking pendulum, but they give light and warmth, too, in their own way, in gentle imitation of the fire. They also have moods—less petulant than the fire's—but they require as little attention as the clock. The fire seems immortal; though the coals fade into ashes, the morning's resurrection seems to continue the same personality, and the same flames seem to be incarnated—living again the same old life. But the life of a candle seems visibly limited to a definite space of time, and its mortal end is clearly to be seen. In that aspect it seems more human and lovable than the fire—a candle is more like a petted animal, whose short life seems to lead to nothing beyond. We may put more coals on the fire, and continue its existence indefinitely, but the candle is doomed. Putting another one in the

socket does not renew a previous existence. Fido is dead. But, if it is a short life, it is a merry one, and its service is glad and generous. My little army of candles is constantly being replenished. Like brave and loyal soldiers, they lay down their lives gallantly in my cause, and new ones fill up the vacant ranks, fighting the powers of darkness.

This is my bachelor reverie. But high noon approaches, and my metamorphosis is at hand. Now the sun has struck the fireplace with a lance of light, and I, that other I, must rise, dress and out into the world!

CARTOMANIA

WITH something of the excitement Alice felt when she crawled through the looking-glass, I used to pore over my atlas. Geography was for me a pastime rather than a study. There was one page in the book where the huge bulging expanse of the United States lay, and there, on the extreme left hand of the vari-colored patchwork of states and territories, was the abode of romance and adventure—a long and narrow patch tinted pink, curving with the Pacific Ocean, and ribbed with the fuzzy haschures of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. This was the Ultima Thule of my dreams, beyond which my sober-minded hopes dared not stray.

Further on in the book I saw Europe, irregular with ragged peninsulas and bays; Asia, vast and shapeless, with the great blue stretch of Siberia atop, and the clumsy barren yellow triangle of Africa. But these foreign countries were, to my young imagination, as inaccessible as Fairyland; they did not properly come into the world of possibility. They were as unreal as

ghosts, remote as the Feudal Ages, and I put them by with a sigh as hopeless. The world is a big place to the eyes of a child, and all beyond his ken but names. How could I know that the end of the century was even then whirling me toward wonders that even my Arabian Magi would not have thought possible? But to-day, in this far western town, then but a semi-barbarous camp of gold miners, I have seen an air-ship half-completed upon the stocks, and this morning, in my own room, I rang up Celestine and talked with her over the wire a hundred miles away!

Maps were my favorite playgrounds, and so real were they that it almost seemed that, with a sufficiently powerful microscope, I might see the very inhabitants living their strangely costumed customs. There was a black dot on my fascinating pink patch marked San Francisco, and now, that dream come true, I try to see this city with the eyes of my childhood, and wonder that I am really here. To get the strangeness of the chance I have to think back and back till I see that map stretched out before the boy, and follow his finger across the tiers of states that run from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

Every one who has not traveled much must feel the excitement that maps give when intently studied. No

one has been everywhere, and for each some unvisited spot must charm him with its romantic possibilities. But there are certain cities almost universally enticing to the imagination—the world's great meeting-places, where, folk tell you, if one but waits long enough, one can find anybody. London, Cairo, Bombay, Hongkong, San Francisco, New York—these are the jewels upon the girdle that surrounds the globe. To know these places is to have lived to the full limit of Anglo-Saxon privilege.

But the true cartomaniac is not content with ready-made countries; he must build his own lands. How many kingdoms and empires have I not drawn from the tip of my pencil! Now, the achievement of a plausible state is not so easy as it might appear. There is nothing so difficult as to create, out of hand, an interesting coast line. Try and invent an irregular shore that shall be convincing, and you will see how much more cleverly Nature works than you. Here is where accident surpasses design. Spill a puddle of colored water on a sheet of paper and pound it with your fist, and lo, an outline is produced which you could not excel in a day's hard work with your pencil!

The establishment of a boundary line, too, requires much thought in order that your frontier interlocks

well with your neighbor's. Your rivers must be well studied, your mountains planned, and your cities located according to the requirements of the game. You must name your places, you must calculate your distances, and you must erase and correct many times before you can rival the picturesque possibilities of such a land as India, for instance, which, from the point of view of the sentimental cartographer, is one of the most interesting of states.

If such an effort is too difficult for the beginner, one might begin with a country of which something is known, yet which never has been charted. *Gulliver's Travels*, for instance, contains information of many lands that should be drawn to scale. Lilliput, Brobdingnag, Laputa and the land of horses would alone make a very interesting atlas. The geography of Fairyland affords charming opportunities for the draftsman. For myself, I prefer the magical territory of the Arthurian legends, and I have platted Sir Launcelot's Isle, with Joyous Gard at the northern end, high over the sea. There is a pleasaunce, a wood, a maze, and a wharf jutting out into a shallow smiling water, while the lists occupy a promontory to the south.

Oh, the opportunities are many for the cartomaniac!

Who has mapped Utopia, Atlantis, Alice's Wonderland, or the countries of the Faerie Queene? Who has reconstructed the plans of Troy? And there are other allegorical lands, too, that should be mapped. I have had a try myself at the modern "Bohemia," and have taken the liberty of showing within its much-maligned borders Arcady and the Forest of Arden. I have even planned Millamours, the city of a thousand loves, and I am now attempting to draw a map of the State of Literature in the year 1902.

There are many celebrated edifices, too, that might be trifled with. I have a friend, an architect, who has completed the Castle of Zenda, and he is now occupied with Circe's palace, with a fine eye to the decorative effect of the pig-pens. Think of laying out the gardens, grottoes and palaces of the Arabian Nights! Why has the Castle of Otranto been neglected—and Udolpho, and Castle Dangerous, and the Moated Grange?

Many novelists, and, I think, most writers of pure romance, have played this game. Stevenson, dreaming in his father's office, drew the map of Treasure Island, and from that chart came forth, hint by hint, the suggestions for his masterpiece. Maurice Hewlett drew a plat of the ancient marches and forests where

the Forest Lovers wandered, and it is a pity he did not publish it in more detail. This is one of the graphical solutions of story-writing, a queer anomalous method whereby the symbol suggests the concept.

The cheaper magazines often use old cuts, and request some hack to write a story to fit the illustration. But the map is an abstraction; its revelations are cabalistic, not definite. A good map is a stage set for romantic fiction, ready for anybody who can write or dream the play.

THE SCIENCE OF FLATTERY

TIME was when people were less sophisticated and almost everybody could be flattered. A compliment was the pinch of salt that could be placed upon any bird's tail. But such game is scarcer now, and to capture one's quarry one has to practise all the arts of modern social warfare. We have, for instance, been taught to believe, time out of mind, that women are especially susceptible to this saccharine process; that one had but to make a pretty speech, and her conquest was assured. But what lady nowadays can take a compliment without bridling? It is as much as a man's reputation is worth to make a plain straightforward statement of approbation. He must veil his meaning so that it can be discovered only by a roundabout reflection. Whether it be true or not, he is held offensively responsible for the blush with which it is received.

So, to be successful, one must be politic and tactful; one must adopt the indirect method, and, above all, one must escape the obvious. To say what has been

said many times before defeats the very purpose, whether it be good or evil, for which we flatter. The artist discards the hackneyed compliment, and endeavors to place his arrow in a spot that has never been hit. He will compliment a poet on his drawings and a painter on his verses. If a woman, ordinarily plainly dressed, has a single effective garment, does he compliment her on that particular costume? By no means. Subtlety demands that he flatter her by pointing out some interesting feature in one of her common frocks, without hinting that it is surprising to see her particularly well clad. Such compliments have the flavor of novelty, and are treasured up by the recipient, to be quoted long after the donor has forgotten them.

The tribute of unexpected praise is more grateful to a person than the reward for which he works hardest and is most confident. It discovers to him new and pleasing attributes. It has all the zest and relish that the particular always has more than the general. And, besides, for the person who happens to light on some little favorite trick of individuality, and to notice and to comment on it, the reward is great. Such a flatterer is, in the heart of the flattered one, throned with the authority of discernment; he is considered forever after as a critic of the first importance. Every one

has a hobby, an idiosyncrasy, visible or invisible; it is the art of the flatterer to discover it, and his science to use it to his own ends.

Flattery is, however, an edged tool, and must be used with care. It is not every one who has the tact to decide at a glance just how much his victim will stand. He may know enough, perhaps, to praise the author of a successful book for some other one of his works which has not attained a popular vogue; he may have the discretion to banter men about their success with the opposite sex, and to accuse women of cleverness; but for all that he may often misjudge his object, and give embarrassment if not actual affront. For all such the safest weapon is the written word.

This is the ambush from which your prey can not escape. If a letter of praise, of compliment, or even of deliberate flattery, is made decently interesting, if it is not too grossly cloying even for private perusal, it can not fail to count. It has to be paid for by no blush, no awkward moment, no painful conspicuous self-consciousness, no hypocritical denial. Striking an undefending victim, it brings him down without a struggle. Such tributes of praise can be read and reread without mortification. It is a sweet-smelling

incense that burns perpetually before the shrine of vanity. One compliment written down in black and white is worth any number of spoken words, and the trouble that has been taken to commit such praise to paper gives the offering an added interest and importance. Anything that can be said can be written, from the eulogy of a lady's slipper to the appreciation of a solo on the harp. You may be sure that any unconventionality of manner will be atoned for by the seduction of a honeyed manner. Stevenson, in his playful *Decalogue for Gentlemen*, set down as his first canon, "Thou shalt not write an anonymous letter," but it can not be doubted that he would have excepted an unsigned note of admiration.

The element of time in flattery, too, is often disregarded. Few would-be flatterers understand the increased influence of a compliment deferred. It is again the same case of the misuse of the obvious. When your friend's book appears, or his picture is displayed, there are enough to compliment him on the spot, but your own sympathetic endorsement, delayed a few months, or even iterated, comes to him when he is least expecting the compliment. He is off his guard, and the shot goes home. When I give Celestine a present she thanks me immediately, of course, but

that is not the last of it. In every third letter or so I am reminded of her gratitude and my kindness.

There is, however, a flattery of manner as well as one of matter. Celestine, to whose wise counsels I am indebted for many a short cut in the making of friends, once laid down for me the following rules for dealing with women :

First, be intellectual with pretty women.

Second, be frivolous with intellectual women.

Third, be serious and *empresé* with young girls.

Fourth, be saucy and impudent with old ladies. Call them by their first names, if necessary.

It goes without saying that such audacious methods require boldness and sureness of touch, especially in the application of the fourth rule. But even that, when attempted with spirit and assurance, has given miraculous results. In a case where a woman's age is in question, action speaks far louder than words.

Perhaps the most successful method of flattery is that of the person who makes the fewest compliments. To gain a name for brusqueness and frankness is, in a way, to attain a reputation for sincerity. Whether this is just or not, it is undoubtedly true that the occasional unlooked-for praise of such a person acquires an exaggerated importance and worth. This system is sim-

ilar to that of the billiard-player who goes through the first half of his game wretchedly in order to surprise his opponent with the dexterity of his shots later on. But it is an amateurish ruse, and is soon discovered and discounted at its true value. Yet in a way, too, it is justifiable, since unpleasant comments are usually accepted as candid, while pleasant ones alone are suspected.

There is a kind of conscious vanity to which flattery comes welcomely, however patent the hyperboles may appear. To such persons, and they are many, a certain amount of adulation oils the mental machine. They do not believe all that is said, but prefer, on the whole, to be surrounded by pleasant fictions rather than by unpleasant facts. They prefer harmony to honesty, and, though the oil on the troubled waters of life does not dispel the storm, it makes easier sailing. To others, especially if they be creators in any art, compliments stimulate and impel to their best endeavor. Many a man has achieved a masterpiece chiefly because, though he disbelieved, a woman declared him capable of it.

The question of the object for which flattery is employed is beside the mark. It may be used or misused; it may be true or false of itself, although, to be

sure, the word flattery has attained an evil significance and has come to stand for counterfeit approval. All that has been said, however, applies to one as well as to the other. Even when praise has the least foundation in fact, it may prove beneficial to the person flattered, arousing a pride which creates the admired quality that was wholly lacking. Thus I have known a man notorious for his vulgarity stimulated to a very creditable politeness by the most undeserved and insincere compliment on his table manners.

I have used the three testimonials of admiration as synonymous, but Celestine says that praise is a rightful fee, a compliment is a tip, and that flattery is bribery.

ROMANCE EN ROUTE

HOW tired I am of the question, "How do you like London?" and "How do you like New York?" "Would you rather live in San Francisco or Paris?" Why, indeed, should I not like London, Kalamazoo, Patagonia, Bombay, or any other place where live men and women walk the streets, eat, drink and are merry? How can I say whether El Dorado is better than Arcady, or a square room more convenient than an oblong one? Every living place has its own fascination, its mysteries, its characteristic delights. Ask me, rather, if I can understand London, if I can catch the point of view of the French *concierge*, if I comprehend the slang and bustle of Chicago? Like them? Show me the town I can not like! Know them? Ah, that is different!

This is the charm of travel—to keep up the feeling of strangeness to the end, never to take things for granted or let them grow stale, to see them always as though one had never seen them before. Then, and only then, can we see things as they really are. When

I become cosmopolitan, world-old, *blasé*, when I think and speak in all languages, I shall fly to some deserted island to study the last, most impenetrable enigma—myself.

But meanwhile, I can purchase romance retail, at the mere cost of a railway ticket. I can close my eyes in one city, and wake next morning in its mental antipode. Romance requires only a new point of view; it is the art of getting fresh glimpses of the commonplace. One need not be transported to the days of chivalry, one need not even travel; one need only begin life anew every morning, and look out upon the world unfamiliarly as the child does. One must be born a discoverer. Thus one may keep youth, for the sport never loses color. One game won or lost, the next has an equal interest, though we use the same counters and the same board. The combinations are always fresh.

Still, though one may find this fountain of perpetual youth in one's breakfast glass, the obvious conventional method is to go forth for the adventure, and get this famed elixir at some foreign and well-advertised spring. For this purpose tourists travel, taking part in a pilgrimage of whose meaning and proper

method they are wholly ignorant. In their boxes and portmanteaus they pack, not hopes of mystery, faith in the compelling marvels of the world, nor the wonder of strange sights; but instead, fault-finding comparisons, and prejudice against all manners not their own. They do not see, in the London tram, the taxi of Paris, the electric trolley of New York and the cable car of San Francisco, the pregnant evidence of several points of view on life, art and commerce, but they perceive only grotesque contrasts with their own particular means of locomotion. They do not delight in the incomprehensible hurly-burly of civilization that has produced the City Man, the Bounder, the Coster, the Hoodlum, Hooligan and Sundowner, nor do they attempt to solve the mystery or get the meat from such strange shells. Instead, they see only the clerk at the lunch-counter bolting his chops and half-pint, the incredible waistcoat of the pretentious *blagueur*, or the buttons and "moke" of the ruffling D'Artagnan of the Old Kent-road.

So the tourist travels with his eyes shut, while the true traveler has a lookout on life, keen for new sensations. To do things in Rome as the Romans do, that is his motto. He must eat full-length spaghetti,

his rice and chopped suey with chop-sticks, or he fails of their subtle relish. He calls no western town crude or uncivilized, but he tries to cultivate a taste for cocktails, that he may imbibe the native fire of occidental enthusiasm. In the East he is an Oriental; he changes his mind, his costume and his spectacles wherever he goes, and underneath the little peculiarities of custom and environment, he finds the essential realities of life.

To taste all this fine crisp flavor of living—not to write about it or fit it to sociological theories, but to live it, understand it, be it—this is the art of travel, the art of romance, the art of youth. But there is no Baedeker to guide such a sentimental tourist through such experiences as these. It takes a lively glance to recognize a man disguised in a frock coat and to find him blood brother to the Esquimau!

Well, there is a place in Utah on the Central Pacific Railroad called Monotony. The settlement consists of a station, a water-tank, and a corrugated iron bunk-house. The level horizon swings round a full circle, enclosing a flat arid waste, bisected by an unfenced line of rails, straight as a stretched string. The population consists of a telegraph operator, a foreman and six section hands. Yet I dare say I could stay there

a while, on the way, and perhaps taste some charm that London never gave. I am not so sure that but that before I took wing again I might not like it, in some respects, better even than Paris.

THE EDGE OF THE WORLD

TO FIND the colonial or the provincial more cultured, better educated in life and keenlier cognizant of the world's progress than the ordinary metropolitan, is a common enough paradox. Class for class, the outlander has more energy, greater sapience and a truer zest of intellect than the citizen at the capital. By the outlander is not meant, however, the mere suburban or rural inhabitant, but the dweller at the outpost of civilization, the picket on the edge of the world.

Let us grant that, in the gross, every new community must be crude. It takes time to grow ivy over the walls, to soften the primary colors into harmonious tones, to smooth off the rough edges—but let us also grant that, at all the back doorways of empire, in far-away corners of the earth, are assembled little coteries of men and women who, by reason of their very isolation, rather than despite it, have made themselves cosmopolitan, catholic, eclectic, and stand ever ready to welcome, each in his own polite dialect and idiom,

the astonished traveler who thinks he has left all that is great and good behind.

This compensation is, indeed, a natural law. If we cut back half the shoots of a shrub, the surviving sprouts will be more vigorous. The deprivation of one sense renders the others more acute. Make it hard for an ambitious lad to obtain an education, and, working alone by candle-light, he will outstrip the student with greater advantages. So it is with the colonial who realizes his poverty of artistic and intellectual resources. He must, in self-defense and to compensate for his isolation, make friends with the world at large, and his mental vision, accustomed to long ranges of sight, becomes sharp and subtle. To avoid the reproach of provincialism he studies the great centers of thought and watches eagerly for the first signs of new growths in fads, fashions, art and politics. It is for this reason that the British colonial is more British than the Englishman at home.

Plunged in the midst of the turmoil of every-day excitements, the dwellers in great cities lose much of the true and fine significance of things. A thousand enterprises are beginning, and amid a myriad essays the headway of yesterday's novelty is lost in the struggle of to-day's agonists. The little, temporary, local

success seems big with import, and the slower development of more serious and permanent virtues is ignored. Things are seen so closely that they are out of true proportion, and they are seen through media of personality that diffract and magnify.

But the provincial, far from this complicated aspect of intellectual life, gains greatly in perspective. Separated by great space, he is, in a way, separated by time also, and he sees what another generation will perhaps see in the history of to-day. For he watches not only literary London, that littlest and most garrulous of gossiping villages, but a dozen other hives of thought as well, and from his very distance can the more easily discern the first signs of preeminence. His ears are not ringing with a myriad petty clamors, but he can hear, rising above the multitudinous hum, the voice of those who sing most clearly.

The connoisseur in art views a painting from across the hall—the lover of music does not sit too close to the orchestra—and so the intelligent looker-on at life does not come too often in familiar touch with the aspirants for fame. Living, as one might say, upon a hill, the stranger thus gets the range, volume and trend of human activities, and sees their movements, like those of armies marching below him, though they

seem as ants, so far away. He can trace the direction of waves of emotion that follow round the earth like tides of the sea.

In every community, however small or remote, there are a few who delight in this comprehensive view of things, who keep up with the times, and, as far as their immediate neighbors are concerned, are ahead of the prevailing mode. As the meteorologist, studying the reports from North, South, East and West, can trace the progress of storm and wind, so these intelligent observers can predict what will be talked about next, and how soon the first murmurs will reach their shores. Their cosmic laboratory is the club library table, with its journals and periodicals from all over the world.

The first hint of a new success in literature comes from the London weeklies, and then, if the British opinion is corroborated by American favor, the New York papers take up the note of praise, and one may follow the progress of a novel's triumph across three thousand five hundred miles of continent, or see the word pass from colony to colony, over the whole empire. The Londoner sees but the bubbles at the spring—the pioneer by the Pacific watches the course of a mighty stream increasing in depth and width. To-

morrow, or in three months, the vogue will reach his own town, and he will smile to see all tongues wag of the latest literary success.

So it is with art, so with fashions, with the drama and with every fad and foible, from golf and Bahiism and Eurythmics to the last song and catchword of the music halls. The colonial is behind the times? What does it matter! Are we not all behind the times of to-morrow? So long as we can not travel faster than the news, it makes little difference; and it is wise, when we are in San Francisco, to do as the Franciscans do. It is as bad to be ahead of the times as to be behind, and it is best to follow the style of one's own locality, with a shrewd eye to one's purchases for the future, buying what we can see must come into popular favor.

But does your metropolitan enjoy this complexity, this living in the future? Not he! He cares nothing for the *vieux jeu*. For him, ping-pong is dead or dying—he neither knows nor cares that it still lives in the Occident, marching in glory ever toward the West, along the old trail to fame. Of the last six successful books discussed over his muffins, does he know which have been virile enough to survive transplanting to other shores—which have emigrated and become natu-

ralized in the colonies? No! He is for the next little victory at the tea tables of the elect!

And yet, this afterglow, this invasion and conquest of new territory is what brings enduring fame. Before the city election is substantiated, the country must be heard from. The urban hears the solo voices of adulation, the worship of those near and dear to celebrity, but the great chorus that sweeps the hero up to Parnassus comes from a wider stage. The army of invasion never comes home again to be hailed as victor until it has encircled the globe. But it is this greater conquest that the dweller at the outpost sees, at first like a cloud no bigger than a man's hand, and it is his game to watch and await it.

It is better so. Waste no pity on him at the edge of the world. For the big game needs big men, and it is the boldest and most strenuous spirits who push to Ultima Thule. The anemic and neurotic do not emigrate; the reddest blood has flowed in the veins of the pioneer ever since the first migration. He does things, rather than talks of things others have done—he knows life, even if he knows not Ibsen. Meet him in his far-away home, and he holds your interest with an unlooked-for charm; take him to the Elgin marbles and he will have and hold his own idea of art unbor-

rowed from text-books. He knows more of your city's history than you do yourself; panic or the furor of a fashion can not hypnotize him. The importance of a celebrated name can not embarrass him, for he has met men unknown to fame who have lived as uncrowned kings. He has seen cities rise from the plain. He has made the wilderness to blossom like the rose; he has lived, not written epics.

And in addition to gaining all this experience that trained the pioneers of old, he has, while living at the confines of civilization, kept in touch with the world, and has tasted the exhilarating flavor of the old and new in one mouthful. For, in this century, distance is swept away and no land is really isolate. The pioneer lives like a god above distinctions of time, at once in the past, the present and the future.

THE DIARY HABIT

FOR seven years I have kept my diary scrupulously, without missing a day, and now, at the beginning of a new twelvemonth, I am wondering whether I should maintain or renounce it. There are certain good habits, it would seem, as hard to break as bad ones, and if the practise of keeping a daily journal is a praiseworthy one, it derives no little of its virtue from sheer inertia. The half-filled book tempts one on; there is a pleasure in seeing the progress of the volume, leaf by leaf; like sentimental misers, we hoard our store of memories. We end each day with a definite statement of fact or fancy, and it grows harder and harder to abstain from the self-enforced duty. Yet it is seldom a pleasure, when one is fatigued with excitement or work, to transmit our affairs to writing. Some, it is true, love it for its own sake, or as a relief for pent-up emotions, but, in one way or another, most autobiographical journalists consider the occupation as a prudent depositor regards his frugal savings in the bank. Some time, somehow, they think, these coined memories will prove useful.

Does this time ever come, I wonder? For me it has not yet arrived, though still I picture a late reflective age when I shall enjoy recalling the past, and live again my old sensations. But life is more strenuous than of yore, and even at seventy or eighty, nowadays, no one need consider himself too old for a fresh, active interest in the world about him. Your old gentleman of to-day does not sit in his corner of the fireplace and dote over the lost years; he reads the morning papers, plays golf and insists on going to the theater with his nieces on wet evenings. Have I, then, been laying up honey for a winter of discontent that shall never come?

Besides this distrust of my diaries, I am awakening after seven years to the fact that, as autobiography, the books are strangely lacking in interest. They are not convincing. I thought, as I did my clerkly task, that I should always be I, but a cursory glance at these naïf pages shows that they were written by a thousand different persons, no one of whom speaks the language of the emotions as I know it to-day. It is true, then; my diary has convinced me that we do become different persons every seven years. Here is written down rage, hate, delight, affection and yearning, no word of which is comprehensible to me now; they

leave me quite cold. I am reading the adventures of some one else, not my own. Who was it? I have forgotten the dialect of my youth. Ah, indeed, the boy is father of the man! I will be indulgent, as a son should, to paternal indiscretions!

And yet, for the bare skeleton of my history, these volumes are useful enough. The pages which, while still wet with ink and tears I considered lyric essays, have fallen to a merely utilitarian value. I am thankful, on that account, for them, and for the fact that my bookkeeping was well systematized and indexed. As outward form goes, my diaries are models of manner. So for those still under the old-fashioned spell, who would adopt a plan of entry, let me describe them.

The especial event of each day, if the day held anything worthy of remark or remembrance, was boldly noted at the top of the page over the date. Whirring the leaves I catch many suggestive phrases: "*Dinner at Mme. Qui Vive's*" (it was there I first tasted champagne), "*Henry Irving in 'Macbeth'*" (but it was not the actor that made that night famous—I took Kitty Carmine home in a hansom!), "Broke my arm" (or else I would never have read Marlowe, I fear), and "Met Sally Reynard" (this was an event, it seemed at that time, worthy of being chronicled in red ink—I

wonder why!) So they go. They are the chapter headings in the book of my life.

In the lower left-hand corner of each page I noted the receipt of letters, the initials of the writers inscribed in little squares, and in the opposite right-hand corner a complementary hieroglyph kept account of every reply sent. So, by running over the pages I can note the fury of my correspondence. (What an industrious scribbler "S. R." was to be sure! I had not thought we went it quite so hard—and "K. C."—how often she appears in the lower left, and how seldom in the lower right! I was a brute, no doubt, so to neglect her, and small wonder she married Fleming-way!)

Perpendicularly, along the inner margin, I wrote the names of those to whom I had been introduced on that day, and on a back page I kept a chronological list of the same. (I met Kitty, it seems, on a Friday—perhaps that accounts for our not hitting it off!) Most of these are names, and nothing more, now, and it gives my heart a leap to come across Celestine in that list of nonentities. (To think that there was ever a time when I did not know her!)

Besides all this, the books are extra-illustrated in the most significant manner. There is hardly a page that

does not contain some trifling memento ; here, a theater coupon pasted in, or a clipping from the program, an engraved card or a penciled note ; there a scrap of a photograph worn out in my pocketbook, somebody's sketched profile, or, at rare intervals, a wisp of some one's hair. (This reddish curl—was it Kitty's or from Dora's brow? Oh, I remember, it was Myrtle gave it me! No, I am wrong; I stole it from Nettie!) I pasted them in with eager trembling fingers, but I regard them now without a tremor. There are other pages being filled which interest me more.

Occasionally I open a book, 1895 perhaps, and consult a date to be sure that Millicent's birthday is on November 12, or to determine just who was at Kitty's coming-out dinner. Here is a diagram of the table with the places of all the guests named. (So I sat beside Nora, did I? And who was Nora? I have forgotten her name! *Now* she is Mrs. Alfred Fortunatus!)

Sometimes I think it would be better to write up my diary in advance, to fill in the year's pages with what I would like to do, and attempt to live up to the prophecy. And yet I have had too many unforeseen pleasures in my life for that. I would rather trust fate than imagination. So, chiefly because I have kept

the book for seven years, I shall probably keep it seven years more. It gratifies my conceit to chronicle my small happenings, and somehow, written down in fair script, they seem important. And besides I am a bit anxious to see just how many times a certain name, which has lately begun to make itself prominent, will appear at the top of the pages. I promise to tell you some time, if Celestine is willing!

THE PERFECT GO-BETWEEN

SURELY the modern invention that has done most to perpetuate Romance is the telephone. The man who, no matter how used to this machine, can take up its ear-piece without a thrill of wonder has no imagination. The locomotive, the steamship, the automobile have but made travel a bit more rapid, they have added no new element of mystery. Even the telegraph fails to give any true feeling of surprise. It is no whit more wonderful than that one, after writing a letter and slipping it into a red mail-box, should be handed a reply by a strange blue-clad gentleman, after many days. A telegraphic despatch does not even hold the handwriting of the sender ; it is cold, colorless, metallic.

But a machine that can bring your friend into the same room with you, at a moment's notice—who can deny the poetry of such a victory over space and time ! Not until some genius invents a thought-transmitter shall a more stupendous aid to Romance be discovered. For see ! It is not only one's friends that are caught in the net of telephone wires, one can drag up a whole

city full! I have but to sit down at my desk and call up a number, and he or she must reply. True, I can not force any one to answer, but if I have the audacity and persistency, it will go hard if I do not find some one who is willing to while away a leisure inquisitive moment in inconsequent conversation.

It is my privilege to live in a telephone city where the habit is extraordinarily developed. One out of every sixteen of the population is connected to that most amiable of go-betweens, the Central Office. I have the opportunity of investigating some thirty thousand persons at the ridiculously cheap price of five cents per soul! Not only every counting-house and shop, doctor's office and corner grocery has its wire, but every residence with any claims to acquaintance. What Romance gone to waste! For few, it seems, have imagination enough to embrace such unlimited opportunities!

This morning Sonia called me at eight twenty-five, apologizing for her kind-heartedness in letting me sleep when she knew I wished to work. Think of that for an alarm clock—Sonia's voice, ten miles away! So I am awakened by the telephone, I call by telephone, flirt by telephone, shop, market and speculate over the same wire. We do not take long in utilizing the latest

invention here in this hurried land—the city is ravaged by Telephonitis. One invites friends to dinner, one makes appointments, breaks the news of the death of a friend, proposes marriage—all by means of this little instrument. I know more than one lady who has her machine connected by flexible wires so that she may talk in bed. She need not be too strict in regard to dress for her interviews—no one ever knows! I know two old men who while away long evenings together playing chess, when the weather is too harsh to leave home. Beside each board stands the faithful receiver; one has but to whisper “K.B. to Q.3” or some such rigamarole into the nickel-plated “extension” and he has checkmated his opponent across the Bay!

With such common intercourse as this, many are the comedies of the telephone. I have myself entertained a visitor with a diversion he will not soon forget. The day he came I took him to my telephone and introduced him in turn to a half-dozen ladies of my acquaintance, who plied him with badinage. We set forth then on a tour of calls, and I enjoyed his several attempts at identifying the voices he had heard over the wire. It is not always easy to recognize a voice and remember it. I remember an unfortunate experience of my own with two sisters that brought a week’s

embarrassment, for the voices of members of one family do have a marvelous similarity in the telephone, and if one is anxious to call on Fanny when Elizabeth is out, one must be very sure just which sister one is speaking to when making an appointment.

The necessity for such precaution has led some of my friends to adopt telephone methods which must be extremely amusing to one who could hear both sides of the conversation. In many houses the telephone is situated in the hall, altogether too near the dining-room for any confidential communication. If the questioner is careful he may so word his inquiries that they may be answered by a mere "yes" or "no"; and papa, smoking after dinner, is none the wiser. If the girl finds it impossible to reply in unguarded terms, she has been known to say, somewhat vaguely, "*Of course,*" which conveys to the man at the other end of the wire the fact that she is not alone. Some, too, have more definite codes. Celestine has arranged with me that when she mentions the *Call* it means the forenoon; the *Chronicle* stands for afternoon, while by the *Examiner* I understand that she refers to the evening. If, then, I ring her up and say, "When can you go walking to-day? I want to be sure not to meet that fool Clubberly." Clubberly, who is at her elbow, hears

her reply sweetly, "Really! Yes, I saw it in the *Chronicle*;" and how is he to know what it is all about? Oh, he could have his revenge easily enough, were he not an ass, for he might be kissing Celestine (horrid thought) even as she is speaking, for all I could know.

With this romantic battery opposed to her, what chance has poor Mrs. Grundy? What hard-hearted parent can successfully immure his daughter while the copper wire reaches out toward her proscribed lover? Here is where love laughs at locksmiths. Were a dozen ineligibles forbidden the house, the moment mama's back is turned to go out for her round of calls, little daughter takes the telephone off the hook and, presto! she has her room full of clandestine company! Does any rash young man dare ring her up while her parents are near, she has but to say, sweetly, "Oh, you have the wrong number!" and hang up. It is too wonderful. You may lie by telephone, with a straight face, or you may call a man a liar with impunity. If you have no answer ready to an ardent impertinence, you need only say nothing and listen—he is helpless; you need not speak unless you want to. Who made the first telephone made mischief for a thousand years to come!

Rrrrrrrrrrrng!!!! There is Celestine ringing me up now! Pardon me if I leave you for a moment, for I think she is going to give me her answer to a very important question. Tremendously important for me! Wish me good luck! I hope no one will be listening!

GROWING UP.

WHEN I asked Perilla how she first came to realize that she was growing up, she said, "When I began of my own accord to wash my sticky fingers without waiting to be told." I believe she meant it literally, with no moral significance that should make a parable of the statement. I hope so, at least, for by that test I can not hope to have yet attained the years of discretion. Little Sister says that she felt "growing pains," but here is a figure of speech, surely. I suppose she means the wonder of the passage from a great wistful ignorance to a limited knowledge! for the first part of the path of life is a very steep upgrade.

I myself can point to no one circumstance that revealed to me the vision of the great march of time that is sweeping us on toward the goal. I was for long like one who looks from the window of a railway carriage, too busily engaged in watching the world fly past him to realize his own motion. Neither long trousers nor razors awoke me from the child-trance;

I saw scorned infants master me by their inches; I heard rumors of love and death and duty, but I was unmoved. It was a part of the game of existence, and it seemed natural that persons should be classified and remain in categories of old and young. I was a spectator outside the merry-go-round. I was to be rich, of course; I had the mind to dare and the will to do. I should be wise, too—why not? Sometimes I should have memories, I thought, not knowing that I was even then living away my life, and that this was an era to which I should look back and deem important.

All my reading, too, went to show that I was an amateur at living. Things seemed really to happen in books, but not to me; there men were swung in unknown furies, sensations were keen and impelling, and life had the sharp sting of reality. My own emotions seemed insipid and inadequate for a citizen of the world. Surely such minor escapades and trivialities as mine were not worth considering. And so, when the storm and stress came, I was ill-prepared, and at the first blow my pride went down. Some devil, as in a dream, whispered in my ear that perhaps I might not succeed after all, and it came to me as a summons that the time had come to be out and doing. And I saw that the conquest of my ambition would be

achieved, not by the impetuous onslaught that should carry all before it, but by the slow and tedious siege, laid with years of waiting and working and watching. It was then, perhaps, though I did not know it, that I began to grow up, and became a man. I opened my eyes and looked about me; it was as if I had been landed fresh from the country in the busy town, like the Sleeper Awakened. No more field-faring and trapesing holidays under the blue sky; I must choose my street and fight my way for it against the throng.

It struck me with a sense of my inferiority that there was an absolute quality of knowledge I had not mastered. Some of my classmates seemed to know things, while I had but acquired information. They could swim; I dared not go in over my head. They had convictions, I had only opinions; it was the difference between the language of Frenchmen and of those who learn French. Here, I thought, was the final classification, and I wrote myself down a witless neophyte in the world's mysteries. For my whole education had been founded on the value of the verity of the straight line, and wisdom was my highest ideal. By this standard I measured myself and my experience. I delighted in the beauty of science, but of that other beauty which is its own excuse for being, I did not

know. I was as one who saw form without color, or the outline without the mass. I had not yet come to myself; I was a child yet, and the result of my immediate environment—a mental chameleon. A few generations of my austere ancestors impregnated my blood with their stern virtues, and it still ran cold and tranquil in my veins. But there were more remote and subtle influences behind me that must work themselves out, and in some sub-stratum of consciousness the pure Greek in me survived.

And so it was Dianeme who brought me at last to the door of the temple, and I saw with her eyes and heard with her ears, and the world grew beautiful, an altogether fitting setting for her charms. And then I knew in very truth that I had grown up; but yet, by a sublime miracle I had in the same revelation recovered my youth—if, indeed, I had ever really been young before! Now, succeed or fail as I might, life would always be fair and interesting, for Dianeme was but one of a divine sisterhood, and there were many degrees to be taken. So a kind of passion seized me to know Life's different phases and find the secret of the whole; and that mood, God willing, shall preserve my virginity to the end.

So here I am, by the grace of Dianeme, on the true

road to youth again, not to that absolute unconcern of all but the present, that I once felt, nor to the fool's paradise, where, Maida would have it, is the true happiness—"the ability to fool one's self"—but to a kind of childlike wonder at things (ah, Little Sister, may you never wander from it as I did!) and the knowledge of what is really the most worth while. (And you, Perilla, you need not pretend that you don't know, for the truth flashes from your jest!)

For this is the very blossom of my youth, the era of knowing, as that was the era of being, and though there may come other dark days, as there were before the bud burst into bloom, I have seen the beginning and I know the law now, and I trust that the fruit of my life, the doing, may be even more worth the while. And I shall perhaps find that wisdom and beauty and goodness are but one thing, as the poets say—that living is a continual growing up, and that age is only a youth that knows why it is happy!

A PAUPER'S MONOLOGUE

UNDERSTAND, I am not one of those who are always longing to be rich. I do very well, ordinarily, in the shadow of prosperity, though there comes upon me periodically the lust for gold, at which times the desire to rush down-town and spend money indiscreetly must be obeyed. It is a common symptom, paupers tell me, and carries with it its own remedy, giving much the same relief that blood-letting did of old, if so be the practise does not lead to a dangerous hemorrhage. I have my ups and downs, like most unsalaried Bohemians, thin purse, thick purse, at erratic intervals, but my spendthrift appetite is curiously independent of these financial fluctuations. In fact, a miserly restraint is most likely to seize me when my pocket is full, and I usually grow reckless when it has no silver lining.

There are few paupers among us who do not conceit themselves to be artists at spending money, and believe the fit intelligence is most wanting in those who have the means. I confess that I share their con-

victions, having wasted much time in a study of the situation. Like those planning a foreign tour, I have mapped out the golden road of Opportunity, and know the itinerary by heart. And, without trespassing the science of Economy, of which I am criminally ignorant (having been somewhat prepossessed during my Sophomore courses), I submit there are active and passive categories into which coupon-cutters may be relegated. The symbol of your monied man's pleasures is the cigar, involving a destructive process, whether applied to food, raiment or ministry to the senses. The greed of the collector is of the same flavor. It is the difference between spending the money to see and to stage the play that I mean.

For why should an access of wealth so dull the brain that the battle between the kings of hearts and spades seems more interesting than the game with human knights and pawns? I have often been minded to write an "Open Letter to Millionaires," and offer myself as Master of their Sports, to guide them through fields of untried sensation and novel enterprises. I have my offers tabulated from an hundred dollars upward, each involving the inception of activities whose ramifications would prove diversion for years. There are twenty young men I know of in this

town who are waiting for such a chance. Why should I not be elected to captain them? I promise you the rise and fall of stocks shall not be more exciting than our rivalries. Indeed, brains are for sale at absurd bargains to-day. Why not play them off against each other in a game of Life?

But these are dreams never to be realized. I am no promoter, and must play the beggar's part. Yet I have often wondered how I would be affected if these hopes came true, and if some capitalist, touched by my appeal, seeing this good seed cast upon barren ground, opening his heart and purse-strings, should present me with a modest fortune without conditions. Could I assume the responsibility of gratitude and fly with the load of obligation that I myself would assume? By all rules of fiction, no! Yet if my conscience were seduced I might frame my mind to accept debonairly and do my best. Tempt me not, millionaires, for this is my week of longing, and my brain boils with adventurous desires.

Yet, had I the ear of the benefactor, another mood would impel my renunciation; for, against my will and interest, I am forced to acknowledge that others are better fitted to be rich than I, who have been a pauper

all my life, and am not so unhappy in my misery. I know some to whom wealth should come as a right, as has their beauty, and who play an inconsistent part upon the stage of poverty. There is Dianeme, who knows the names of all the roses, and can tell one etching from another. She is so instinct with tact and taste that I feel quite unworthy of affluence until she has been served. And there, too, is Little Sister, who is in worse case, having once ridden on high wheels and nestled against the padded comforts of life, now charioted by street-cars, with a motorman for a driver and a conductor for a footman. And though it was her reverses that gave me chance to be her friend and discover her worth, yet I fear I would put back my opportunity ten years to give her the little luxuries she craves. She has acquired a relish for the flesh-pots, poor Little Sister, and somehow the weakness becomes her, as the habit of weeping fitted the eighteenth century ideals of women. Two more pairs of silk stockings would reinstate her as a lady complete. Not that anybody but Little Sister and her laundress would ever see them, but they would give her a nourishing satisfaction that is of itself worth while.

Yet, again I wonder—if Little Sister grew rich,

what would become of me? I am told that the first pangs of the birth of Fortune are felt in the unpleasant acquisition of new claimants to friendship, but I do not believe this is so. I should myself fear to intrude, I am sure. There would be so many new relations and obligations that I could not take the friendship simply and naturally. I could make love to her by letter, perhaps, but not in her carriage. I would miss the ungloved hand of familiarity and enclose myself in starched formality, though I know the pain in so doing would be mutual. For the pride of riches is as nothing to the pride of poverty, and I am very, very poor! But surely Little Sister must be rich again, even if I have to wait for the second table.

And so I gracefully resign my claims to fortune, where I am so outclassed, and make off into the open fields toward the Hills of Fame, where the brougham of Opulence may not follow me, though I fare afoot. For we do not get rich in my family; there is no uncle in Patagonia whose death could benefit us, and the bag of diamonds, the hope of whose discovery sustained my immature youth, no longer haunts my dreams. For a long time yet I must deny myself the title of gentleman, forced as I am to carry parcels "over three inches square," which I hear is the test

of fashionable caste. This is my last gasp. I shall be a man again to-morrow, and if any millionaire is tempted by this appeal, he must make haste. But I shall not be rung up from sleep to-night. It is the law of society that Spend helps Save, and Save helps Scrimp, and Scrimp helps Starve.

A YOUNG MAN'S FANCY

UNDOUBTEDLY the most logical, though perhaps the least interesting, method of opening the discussion of a thesis, is that employed by the skilful carver who dissects his duck according to the natural divisions of the subject and proceeds therewith analytically. This is the system encouraged in academic courses and is said to enable any one to write upon any subject. But such an essay is mighty hard reading; unless a writer is so hungry for his theme that he forgets his manners and falls to without ceremony the chances are that his efforts will receive scant attention. And so I shyly speak of love.

So few essayists write with a good appetite! And yet, see how I restrain myself, and perforce adopt the conventional procedure, as one too proud to betray his ravening hunger! I must be calm, I must be polite—and you shall know only by my forgetfulness of the salt and my attention to the bones of thought, how the game interests me. In speaking of love, I must let my head guard my heart, too, for it is in the endeavor to

misunderstand women that we pass our most delightful moments. They will not permit men to be too sure of them, and what you learn from one, you must hide carefully from the next. So I begin my fencing with a great feint of awkwardness, like a master with a beginner, knowing well enough how likely to get into trouble is any one who pretends to knowledge.

For a long time I believed it all a conspiracy of the novelists, and that love, so ideally depicted, was but a myth, kept alive by the craft, to furnish a backbone for literary sensation. But there are undoubtedly many bigoted believers in the theory of love. The women, however, who admit that it is a lost art, complain piteously of the ineptitude of the other sex. I confess that few men can satisfactorily acquit themselves of the ordeal of courtship without some tuition, but, once having acquired the rudiments of the profession, it seems inconsistent to taunt them with the experiments of their apprenticeship. It is too much to require a man to make a gallant wooing and then twit him with the "promiscuousness" by which he won his facility. Yet, some, doubtless, have learned also to defend themselves against this last accusation; it is the test of the Passed Master. For the other, poor dolts, who never see the opportunity for action, how-

ever adroitly presented, who speak when they should hold tongue and leave undone all those things that they ought to have done—the girls marry them, to be sure, but most of the love-making is on the wrong side. There are more yawns than kisses; the brutal question satisfies the yop, and he bungles through the engagement, breaking doggedly through the crust of the acquaintance, witless of the delightful perils of thin ice.

And yet I think the subject might be mastered in four lessons with a good teacher, so that a man of ordinary capacity could make good way for himself. This is by no means a new theory; it is the foundation of many a comedy of errors, this of *Love with a Tutor*. But go not to school of a maid, for she will fool you to the top of your bent, nor to a married woman either, but to a man like my younger brother here, no *Lothario*, but one who can keep two steps ahead of any affair he enters.

If a man be agile and daring, with sufficient ardor to assume the offensive, having an audacious tongue and a wary eye with a fine sense of congruity and tact, withal, if he can make love with a laugh and a rhyme, as *Cyrano* fought, then 'tis a different matter, and he needs no pilot to take his sweetheart over the bar and

into the port. He must be bold, but not too bold, carry a big spread of canvass, luff, reef and tack her with no shuffling, cast the lead on the run, keeping in soundings, and never lose headway when she comes about into a new mood. He must bear a sensitive hand at the tiller, keep her close up to the wind with no tremble in the leach of the sail, and gain advantage from every tide and cross-current. Better dash against the reef than run high and dry upon the shoal!

It is a pity, is it not, to dissect love in such a fashion? I should have my hero quite at the mercy of the gale of passion, and be swept forward, he knows not how and cares not where; he should lose his wits and take a mad delight in the fury of the storm, seeing no spot upon his horizon. And yet I dare not be warmer, for some time I may decide to fall in love myself, and I would not have my chances wrecked by any genuine confession of faith, set in type, to which She might refer, with a beautiful taunt. No! it is better to phrase and verbalize; the subject is too dear, and near done to its death already. I would but suggest the cross-references, and, under a mien of conceit, throw my female readers off their guard, leaving my fellow-men to read between the lines.

For I hear that men do fall in love with women,

while women fall in love with loving. So be it. I have known girls, too, to take both vanilla and strawberry in their soda-water, which proves them to be not altogether simple in their tastes. The best of them will talk volubly upon love in the abstract, while the average man (to which category I hope I have the honor of not belonging) keeps his mouth closed on the matter, with his tongue in his cheek, and his ideas, if he have any, well hidden behind his words.

So, if I avail myself of the feminine franchise, it must be done cautiously, for many are the difficulties of the young man who would love a girl to-day, and only a precious few of the old school of beaux would understand the twentieth century's subtleties, even if all could be explained. Many are the misfortunes in the Lover's Litany, from which the modern maiden sighs, "Good Lord, deliver us!" A man must take her in earnest, but he must by no means take himself too seriously; it is proper to treat your passion cavalierly—indeed, he jests at scars who has felt the most amorous darts, nowadays—but he must never make himself or her ridiculous. He may take whimsical amusement in his own conquest, but must beware "the little broken laugh that spoils a kiss." And above all, mind you the *mise-en-scène*—the stage must be set so and so; the

sun must not see what the moon sees. Sometimes you must have your heart in your mouth, and sometimes on your sleeve, and oftener she must have it herself. 'Tis very perplexing!

The best a man can do, in this practical age, is to mean business, while he is about it, and hold over as much for the next day as will not interfere with his commerce elsewhere. The woman may take her romance to bed, or keep it warm in the oven against his return, but he must be out and down-town to earn his living as well as his loving, among dollars and pounds and cent per cent, while she enjoys the traffic in pure abstractions. And both must hide and manage as if it were a sin, lest Mrs. Grundy undo them; they must snatch their kisses, as it were, on horseback. Such are the victims of supercivilization!

There was a time, the poets tell, when it was not so difficult, and a man might wear a lady's scarf on his sleeve, and be proud of the badge. It takes much more complicated machinery than that simple love to make the world go round, nowadays—perhaps because it goes so much faster. There was a time when an elopement might be picturesque and not necessarily followed by divorce; but where now shall I find the hard-hearted parent who shall justify the adventure?

The modern mother is too easy. She is like Mrs. Brown in the *Bab Ballads*—"a foolish, weak but amiable old thing." She reposes a trust in her daughter that does more credit to her affection than to her knowledge of human nature.

But whoa! I believe I have forgotten my manners! I have insulted my fellows, guded the girls, and here I am on the high road to disqualifying myself with the more respectable generation. So I shall cease, but I will not apologize, for though I came to scoff, I shall not remain to prey. I believe I am not more than half wrong after all. There is love, and there is loving, and if you have followed me, you know which is which. It was Rosalind who said, "Some Cupid kills with arrows, some with traps!" How she would smile and sneer at this verbiage! She knew a lover from a philanderer, she had her opinion of the laggard and the butterfly rover, and, hearing my folly, she would no doubt say: "Cupid hath clapped him on the shoulder, but I'll warrant him heart-whole!"

THE BACHELOR'S ADVANTAGE

THERE are enough who think "a young man married is a young man marred" to cause the bachelor to hesitate before renouncing his liberties, and to fight shy of entanglement as long as possible. If he writes down the "pros" and "cons," like Robinson Crusoe, he will find he has many advantages in his single state that must inevitably be forfeited when he weds:

It is not only that "when I was single my pockets would jingle, I would I were single again;" it is not so much, either, that his play-day will be over and he must "settle down," stop butterfly-loving to and fro, and gathering the roses as he goes, and have a haunting white face sitting up for him at home to ask him why, and how, and where. This license, if he be a man of sentiment, he willingly foregoes for the larger possibilities of satisfactory comradeship and sympathy. He can pay double rent and taxes, too, without grumbling; take manfully the shock of surprise when expenses jump with the new establishment; he may be

initiated in doctor's fees, and submit debonairly to a thousand restrictions of time, place and opportunity. But more piquant than any of these trials is the discovery that he has lost his old-time place and privilege of welcome as a bachelor—that "come any time" hospitality of his dearest friends. He is saddled with a secondary consideration.

Try as he may, no young man can marry to please his whole acquaintance. The world, for the most part, still looks with patronizing approval on a girl's wedding so long as she chooses or is chosen by a man not hopelessly impossible. She has embraced an opportunity and usually her mother cultivates a grateful fondness for the son-in-law. If he has a scarcity of amiable traits she will even manufacture them for him, and put them on the market with display. Not so the mother of the groom. She analyzes the bride with incisive dissection, and it is hardly possible that any woman shall be found quite worthy to mate with her son. It takes a woman to read women, she says, and the young wife has to make a fight for each step of the road from condescension through complaisance to compliment.

The young man's friends, too, are exigent, and he

soon finds that, though the two have been made one in the sight of law and clergy, society knows no such miraculous algebra. You may squeeze in an extra chair at the dinner table for a desirable and "interesting young man," but to include another lady, and that his wife, requires a tiresome rearrangement. He does not come alone ordinarily, nor would he if asked, and so he drops out of his little world and must set about the creation of a new one. He may have had latch-key privileges at a dozen houses, free to come night or morning, the recipient of many sudden invitations for theater, supper or country—but that is all over. It is his turn to do the inviting. The table has been well turned when he sits down to meat!

Is it to be wondered at, then, that the bachelor is selfish? He escapes lightly the lesson of compromise; his whole life is a training in egoism, and he makes the most of his desirability, getting usually far more than he gives. He is free to experiment in acquaintance though it goes no further than innocuous flirtation. He may make friendships for himself and break them at will, lightly dodging the tie. There are hundreds in every city who need go only where they wish, skipping even "duty calls," sure of forgiveness. He may

know men and women he cares for, and, through the lack of experience in a life-long intimacy, he may preserve many illusions as to women. If he has an income, or a profession that demands no abode, he can wander "to and fro in the earth and walk up and down in it" free as Satan. He travels the farthest who travels alone.

Still, this can not go on forever, and his franchise wanes. With the first pang of middle age Nature asserts her imperious demand for permanent companionship. The "cons" grow heavier, and the "pros" more attractive. He sees maid after maid of his younger fancy pass out of the game without regret, but the first sight of the new generation strikes him to the heart. He is "uncled" by more and more adopted nephews and nieces, and the sight of their fresh eyes awakens the immemorial longing in him. And then, suddenly, another "pro" comes upon the list, an undeniable item of importance, throwing its influence so heavily upon the side of marriage that no number of his foolish little "cons" can ever balance the account. He is in love, and there is but one definition for that state. It is the immediate, ravenous, compelling desire for a wife. There is nothing for it but

to renounce allegiance to his old friends and become naturalized into a new citizenship.

But though all over town the doors to which he cried "open sesame" bang sullenly to shut him out, he does not notice it if that one portal lets him in!

THE CONFESSIONS OF AN IGNORAMUS

MUSICIANS tell me that I am exceptionally fortunate. I know absolutely nothing of music. It is not a bald fathomless innocence, however. I am not tone-deaf, for instance, and certain compositions please me; and, knowing nothing, I have been treated with indulgent complaisance by the profession, and among them I have the unique license of being privileged to like whatever I choose. It is no small distinction this, nowadays, when one is nicely and strictly rated by his compliance to the regnant mode, but I have to fight tooth and nail to defend my innocence. I have determined that whatever happens, I will not be educated.

For a while, once on a time, I hazarded my franchise of free speech and weakly accepted the tutelage of a master, that I might at least gain a familiarity with the catch-words of the musical fraternity. It was the more reprehensible and foolish because I had already lost my virginity in art circles by the same

servility. Long ago I learned to phrase and gesticulate at the picture galleries, and try as I may, I can not forget the formulæ. I learned to stand with eyes half closed before a painting, and, waving my hand, murmur, "I like *this* part, in here!" I caught that knowing waggle of the right thumb, and prated of "modeling, tricky work, atmosphere, composition, values," and such humbuggery. I could say, straight-faced, and with a vicious, explosive gesture, "Oh, it's good in color, but it just lacks *that*, you know!" By jove! I was in up to the ears before I knew it, and now my critiques are retailed to the semi-elect as coming from one of the Cognoscenti. I have learned the terminology of the craft so well that my very instructors have forgotten my novitiate; but an art exhibition is a horror to me, for I go bound by the tenure of hypocrisy and dare not walk freely, forced to rattle my chains as I limp through the forbidden pastures of delight—the candy box pictures and chromos that my soul loves with that fierce first love that never dies.

So I have learned to avoid the Pierian spring now, having escaped the seductions of Euterpe by the merest chance. He is said to be a fool who is caught twice by the same trick, and I write myself down a

worse-witted clown yet when I confess how far on the high road to folly I was before I jumped the fence of conventional parlance and broke for the wide fields where lies my freedom.

I had been led astray by practising the non-committal remark, "Oh, what *is* that?" as soon as the piano keys cooled off from the startling massage of the furious performer. I was bold. I even dared to be the first to speak, and I threw ambiguous meanings into that well-known exclamation, for I was assured it was always safe, whether it followed a Moskowski mazurka hot from the blunt fingers of a Kansas City poor relation, or a somnolent Chopinian prelude hypnotized by the evening star. I learned that the statute of Absorbed Attention had expired, and that the lifted eyebrow, the semi-concealed shrug, the overt smile behind the performer's back, and the *ex post facto* rescindment of all these in one mucilaginous compliment, were now good taste. Bah! I sickened of it all soon enough, for I had been piously brought up, and my Puritan blood was anti-toxic to the corruptions of the musical microbe.

And so I have forgotten to speak of Grieg as a "mere sentimentalist" and all the rest of the Pharisee's

phrase-book, thank God! I can hear the *Mill in the Forest* and check up its verisimilitudes, item by item, even as I have dared to renew my youth with Charles Dickens, and laugh, cry, and grow hot and cold with Scott's marionettes.

Yet, as I said, my innocence is not altogether empty. There is, indeed, no such thing in life as absolute darkness; one's eyes revolt and hasten to fill the vacuum by floating in sparks, dream-patterns, figures whimsical and figures grotesque, shifting, clad in complementary colors, to appease the indignant cups and rods of the retina. And so my musical ignorance is alive with a fey intelligence of its own. I have come at last to an original conception of what is good and what is bad by its mere psychological effect, as illogical as a woman's intuition, yet as absolute and empirical as the test of acid and alkali by litmus.

It has come to this, that I know now I shall never hear good music again. When I was young the phrase "classical music" was still extant (I come of the middle classes, where one calls a spade a spade), and that variety of sound, "the most expensive of noises," was as incomprehensible as was the training for its appreciation arduous; so that beauty for its own sake

was unknown, or lurked behind the horizontal mountains of Truth that shut in the New England landscape.

But as my knowledge and love of art grew, and I mingled with those that spoke this foreign tongue of beauty, I had opportunity of hearing music, the only music that was worth while to them, the music that endures and lives, continually virile and creative. Curiously enough, and unhappily for me, so long a stranger to such influences, I found that some compositions spelled me with their subtlety, tranced me into reverie, while others awakened active feelings of amusement, surprise, or scientific curiosity as to their construction; and so, ignorant of technique and composition, harmony, and all the rules of the art, I have gone back to the woman in me, and trust to her little ounce of instinct.

When the vibrant chords, the sobbing pulsations and the mystical nuances grow faint and die away as my dream mounts on the wings of an invisible melody, leaving the sawing bows, the brazen curly horns, the disks, cylinders, strings, keys, triangles, curves and tubes, with which paraphernalia the magicians of the orchestra have bewitched me, far, far, far below where I soar aloft, naked and alone in the secret spaces of

my soul,—I know (not then, but afterward) that the talisman has been at work, and as the rhythm dies and I drop, drop to the world again and turn to the trembling, wide-eyed girl at my left, and am roused by the brutal applause that surges around me,—I know that this was *music*. But I have not heard it. Alas! Shall I never hear it?

A MUSIC-BOX RECITAL

HID secretly in my heart, long I had a passion for music-boxes. While I was innocent of the ways of the world, and thought that Art, as some think that Manners, had a ritual to which one must conform in order to be considered a gentleman, I hid this low-born taste from my friends and talked daintily of Brahms, his frozen music, of the architectural sonata, and other things I did not understand. How musicians and artists must have laughed at me when they saw my hands—square, constructive palms, wilful thumbs and mechanical fingers! Music-box hands! But though I had long ceased cutting stencils of other people's thoughts and frescoing my own vanity therewith, I dared not confess to John this wretchedly vulgar *penchant* for the music-box of Commerce—the small, varnished, brass and cedar affair, which is the only instrument I can play.

But at ten of the clock one night the yearning became so intense in me that I burst the bonds of my discretion, and lo! at the first word John fell heavily into my arms. He, too, cherished this unhallowed joy

in secret, and had long hidden this *tendresse* behind a mask of propriety. We dried our eyes, and were into overcoats and out on the street in a single presto measure, set to a swift staccato march for the Bowery. We must have a music-box apiece before we slept—we swore it in a great forte oath! Prestissimo! but we were hungry for a good three-dollar package of discord! It was none of these modern contrivances with perforated disks and interchangeable tunes we were after; not the penny-in-the-slot, beer saloon air-shaker nor the anthropomorphic Pianola, nor yet the parrot-like phonograph cruelly precise; no, only the regulation old-fashioned Swiss instrument would serve, the music-box of our youth, the wonderful, complicated little engine with a cylinder bristling with pins that pricked forth harmonies from the soul of a steel comb, its melody limpid with treble accompaniments lithely sustained at the small end, where the teeth are small and active, with a picture of children skating on the cover top, and beneath, under glass—oh! rapture!—the whirring wheels all in sight, tempting the small, inquisitive finger of youth.

After an incredible amount of discussion as to the relative merits of the repertoires, we came to a decision and fled home, to abandon ourselves to the dis-

tractions of our tiny orchestras. The boxes were so full of music! They have been trying to empty themselves ever since, but the magic purse seems inexhaustible. One night, in my idyllic youth, a German band played all night long under my window; but now I could carry the divine gift of music in my overcoat pocket! I was like that Persian monarch for whom was made the first pair of shoes. "Your Majesty," said his vizier, "now at last for you, indeed, is the whole world covered with leather, as thou hast demanded!" O Allah! Now for me was the whole world patrolled with German bands! They played *Say Au Revoir*, but not *Good-by* under my pillow; they gave me *Honey, my Honey* as I ate my breakfast.

Before the week was up we had learned every tune by heart, down to the last grace-note in the accompaniment. We had learned, too, the sequence of tunes, inevitable, unchanging as the laws of the Medes of old. Never again shall I be able to hear *Sweet Marie* played without a shock that it is not followed by the *Isabella Waltz*! Never again shall I hear the end of *Honey, my Honey* without a tremble of nervous suspense till comes the little *click!* of the shooting cylinder, the apprehensive pause, and then—hurrah! the first gay notes of *Sweet Marie!*

But we could not long endure the perfect simplicity of the airs, and the old touch of supercivilization led us on to attempt to vary and improve the performance of our songs. It was John who discovered the virtue of a few pillows stuffed on top of the machine, and he achieved immense *con expressione* effects by waving the box wildly in the air. I contented myself with changing the angle of the fan-wheel so as to make it play *allegro*; then one got so very much music in such a very little while—surely a pardonable gluttony! Had my box been larger I might have heard seven complete operas in an hour, like the old Duke in *Sylvie and Bruno*! Yet, after all, it was versatility of quality, rather than mere quantity, that should be the greatest victory, and we set out on experiments in *timbre*. At last we found, John and I, that by inserting a little paper cylinder under the glass, so as to press on the keys, we could give Sousa the grip, as one might say, and he would cough and wheeze in a way amply to discredit the statement that there is no such thing as humor in music. A greater thickness of paper gives the effect of a *duo* with mandolin and banjo, and this was by far the most successful of our variations.

I should end as I began, I know, by a bit of maud-

lin philosophical moralysis. I might, for instance, trace the resemblances in the musical world and say that for me the conductor waving his baton is as one who winds the key to a very human music-box, in which each tooth of the comb is a living, vibrant soul. Or I might broach a flagon of morality, forbye, and show how each one of us plays his little mental tunes in a set routine, wound up by the Great Musician; what devils stick their fingers into our works, and bid us play more fast or slow, more loud, more low; what jests of Fate, who inserts her cacophonous paper cylinder that we may wheeze through misfortunate obligatos of pain.

But no! My forelegs are stuck in the bog of realism, and I shall not budge from the literal presentation, for my little kingdom of delight suffered a revolution! It was John's fault, for John had been affecting a musical countess who gave afternoon talks on the "art of listening," in a studio—dry molecular analyses of Kneisel Quartets and such like verbiage. So he came home late one night, while a music-box was bowling away merrily upon the couch with a one-pillow soft pedal. It was my music-box, too!

"Bah!" he swore, "your box phrases so abominably. It is so cold, so restrained, so colorless! Hear mine,

now—isn't that an excellent *pianissimo*? There's polished technique! There's *chiaroscuro*! Oh, listen to that *Cat Came Back*! My machine is an artist; yours is a mere *virtuoso*. Mine is a Joachim, a d'Albert; yours is a Musin, a de Kontski. Get on to the smooth, suave *legato* of this wonderful box! Hear its virile octaves! Hark to those scales, like strings of white-hot pearls dropping upon velvet!" He was moaning and tossing as he snored these parodies. It was a nightmare, both for him and for me. At four o'clock, in the first pink gray of the morning, I could endure it no longer. Our paradise was lost. The critic, as snake, had polluted our innocent Eden. I arose haggardly and threw the two music-boxes into the fire!

A PLEA FOR THE PRECIOUS

NOW if a youth as mad-headed as I, without bookishness or literary education of any sort, with neither much of anything to say, nor much desire to say anything—if such a charlatan would have his wares bought and his words read, he must be antic beyond his contemporains (a shorter word than the English equivalent, whereby I go forward one step in brevity and back two in translation). He must pique curiosity and tempt the reader on; he must pay a contango, which is, by the same token, a premium paid for the privilege of deferring interest. He must, in short, be “precious,” a quality essentially self-conscious. This has been at times a popular pose in Letters, and when successful it is a sufficiently amusing one, as poses go; but I name no names for the sake of the others who fall between the stools of purpose and pretense—who tie, as one might say, two one-legged beggars together and think they have made a whole man.

If I have lured you so far into the web of my va-

gary, pray come into my parlor, too, and be hung for the whole sheep that you are, that I may fleece you close with my sophistries before you go. I have but one toy here to amuse you. I juggle idioms and balance phrases upon my pen, and whether you laugh at me or with me, I care not, *moi*. But as seriously as is possible (seriousness is not my present pose, I assure you), I would I might wheedle some of your dogged, clogged, rugged, ragged, fagged, foggy wits out of you, and constrain you to accept my pinchbeck for true plate the while; for I have a little sense in my alloy, after all, and you might go further and fare the worse than by my chatter. If I dared I would jump boldly into my thesis, without apologies; but it so happens that it is one that should be itself its own illustration. I should convince you of its truth by its own garment of expression, instead of depending upon my logical introductory presentation. But this I fear to try. My pistols, I fear, are, as the Duchess of Malfi might say, loaded with nothing but perfumes and kissing-comfits.

Now that you are well a-muddled, and like to turn to a saner page, let me button-hole you with one clean statement while you stand, gasping. Indeed I fear that a dozen have fled already from my gibbering,

and I speak to but one sullen survivor, determined to collect his promised interest. We know, then, the joy of color, taste, sound and odor as mere sensual gratifications, undiluted with significance. But, since I seldom read, I have never seen the apology for the sensual pleasures of diction, pure and simple in its essence. Swinburne, I hear, has his lilts and harmonies in poesy, and perhaps that is the nearest like, except for the Purpose that drives his chariot; but I am for that runaway mood that gallops gaily forth into Nowhere, unguided and unrestrained. A twenty bookmen shall come up to me, no doubt, with their index fingers set upon examples, but I am happier in my ignorance, and I prefer to think it has not yet been done—or, at least, not exactly as I mean. Indeed, you may depend upon me to evade proof with some quibble.

Your didactic prose is a wain, pulled over the hard city street. Fiction is the jaunting-car that paddles down the by-side lane. Poetry wallops you along the bridle path with your mistress Muse on a pillion, and, but very rarely, dares across country, over a low hedge or two (but always after some fleeting hare of thought); but I—I am for the reckless run over the moor and downs—the riderless random enthusiasm of

nonsense! So out of my way, gentlemen of the red coats, or I bowl you down! Mazeppa might do for a figure, but his steed was hampered with the load; his runaway had too savage an import, and it is my purpose to be only a little mad. Pegasus is a forbidden metaphor nowadays. He is hackneyed by the livery of vulgar stables. I prefer that Black Horse, vanned and terrible, who flicked out the eyes of the Second Calender, as my mount is like to serve me!

In the sonata is an exemplification of my theory. There, now, is a vehicle that carries no passengers, save what one's fancy lades it with—it charges and soars with no visible rein to guide it, except when a thread of melody steers it into some little course of delight. So there is a secret rhythm in the best prose that is more subtle than the meters of verse, and which is to the essay what the expression of the face is to the talker. One may, indeed, use that same word, expression or gesture, instead of the common term, style. But a common or house observation shows us that there is some pleasure in the face whose lips are dumb, and I dare say there is joy for the coxcomb and female fop in the unworn gown, as it hangs on its lonely nail, or is draped on the lay figure of meaningless, meaningful form. So it is to such hair-brains and cockatoos I

appeal. Come to my masquerade and let us for a wild half-hour wear the spangles and tights of palestric impropriety, hid by a visor that shall not betray our thought. In this lesser pantomime one may be irrelevant, inconsequent and immature, and sport the flower of thought that has not yet fruited into purpose.

Can you find your way through this frivolity, mixed metaphor and tricky phrase, and see what a wanton a paragraph may become when one sends it forth, free from the conventional moralities of licensed Literature? I have been to many such debauch, and have got so drunk on adjectives that I thought all my thoughts double. In this harlequinade, too, there are more games than my promised sonata. I will mock you the *Mill in the Forest*, or any other descriptive piece, with colored words, parodying your orchestra with graphic nonsense. I will paint the charms of the dance in seductive syllables; or no! better—the long forthright swing of the skater, this way, that way, fast and faster, the Ice King's master, the nibble of the cold, the brush of the rasping breeze, the little rascally hubbles where the wind has pimped the surface, and the dark, blue-black slippery glare beyond, where—damn it!—I shock you with a raucous expletive, and you plunk into a dash of ice-cold remonstrance up to

your ears, and flounder, cold and dripping, tooth-loose, and gray with fright!

So at the expense of good taste and to the grief of the judicious, I force my point upon you. *En garde, messieurs*, and answer me! I find few enough who can play the game with me or for me. The age of Chivalry is gone, in horsemanship as well as in feats of arms and sword-play. Who knows the demi-volt, the caracole, the curvet, the capriole or the rest of the Seven Movements? Who is elegant in the High Mânège or Raised Airs? Who prances for the sheer delight of gallant rhetoric, on Litotes, Asteism or Onomatopœia? Fain would I be bedeviled, but the Magii are passed away. I must fall back on Doctor Johnson's pious flim-flam, but the humors of his verbiage are in me, not in him.

Yet the New Century Carnival is proclaimed and, over the water, there are, I hear, a few who are to revel with King Rex in the Empire of Unreason. On this side the nearest we have got to it is a little machine-made nonsense, ground out for the supposititious amusement of babes. But what I mean is neither second childhood, nor bombast, nor buffoonery, nor silliness, nor even insanity—though that is nearest the mark—but a tipsy Hell-raising with this wine of our fine old

English speech. It has been too long corked up and cobwebbed by tradition, sanctified to the Elect, and discreetly dispensed at decorous dinner tables by respectable authors and ladies-with-three-names who also write. It has been too long sipped and tasted mincingly out of the cut-glass goblets of the literary table.

Gentlemen-inebriates all, I wave you the red flag! A torch this way! What ho, roysterers! Up younglings, quodlings, dab-chicks, devil-may-cares and mad-mannered blades! To the devil with the tip-staves and tithing-men, constables, beadles, vergers, deputy-sheriffs and long-lipped parsons! A raid on the wine-cellar to break flagons of good English, and drink, drink, drink, till your heads spin! There is still joy and intoxication in the jolly old bottles filled by Shakespeare and his giddy-phrased buccaneering crew. Let the serious scorn and philosophers prate! "By Gadslid! I scorn it, to be a consort for every humdrum, hang them, scroyles!"

SUB ROSA

PERHAPS I am as discreet, honorable and loyal as the ordinary man, but I confess that at times I have a frantic desire to escape to the moon and tell all I know, or to unburden myself of the weight of dynamic confidences, pouring my revelations into the ears of some responsive idiot. In the old days a corpse was fastened to the felon's back in punishment of certain crimes, and to me a secret seems almost as deadly a load. The temptation to vivify the tale and make it walk abroad on its own legs is hard to deny.

There are secrets so dangerous that to possess them is foolhardy. It is like storing dynamite in one's drawing-room; an explosion is always imminent, and publication would mean disaster. I have known tales myself, so outrageous, so bulging with scandal, that, had I not promptly forgotten them, they would have undone society twenty times over! There is a titillating pleasure in the keeping of such terrific truths and it increases one's inward pride to think that one knows of another what, if told, would change the aspect of a

life. The temptation to tell is like being in church and suddenly seized with an almost irresistible impulse to shriek aloud, or like standing at the verge of a cliff and being impelled to throw one's self over. To give way to the perfidious thought means moral death, and when one falls, one brings others down as well.

Many of us, though we conceit ourselves to be worthy of trust, are, as regards our secrets, in a state of unstable equilibrium. Women, seeing and feeling things more personally and subjectively than men, are especially hazardously poised. So long as the friendship with the confidant is preserved, the secret is safe, but let estrangement come, and suddenly the balance becomes top-heavy; one's morality falls and the secret escapes in the crash of anger. I have known women who felt themselves quite free to tell secrets when the proper owner of them proved guilty of unfaithfulness. The difference in view-point of the sexes seems to be this: men have a definite code of honor, certain well-recognized laws of conduct acknowledged even by those who do not always obey them. "The brand of the dog is upon him by whom is a secret revealed." If a woman is honorable (in the man's sense of the term), it is a test of her individual character, and not of conformity to any feminine ethical system.

Most men, for instance, and some women (especially when influenced by love or great friendship), will keep a confidence not only passively, but actively. As Kipling's *Hafiz* teaches—

“If there be trouble to Herward, and a lie of the blackest can
clear,
Lie, while thy lips can move, or a man is alive to hear!”

It seems right, too, that in lesser cases one is justified in lying to protect one's own secret, as in disavowing the authorship of an anonymous book; for one surely need not be at the mercy of every questioner. The true confidant is not a mere negative receptacle for your story, but a positive ally.

On the other hand, there are those who hold that a singular and prime friendship dissolves all other obligations whatsoever, and that secrets betrayed are the greatest sacrifices possible upon the altar of love. Montaigne says, “The secret I have sworn not to reveal to any other I may, without perjury, communicate to him who is not another, but myself.” There are few friendships nowadays so close as his with Estienne de la Boëtie (who, himself, “would not so much as lie in jest”); theirs was one of the great friendships of history; but there is much casuistry used by those who

would manifest their importance in knowing mysterious things. They obey the letter of the law and tell without really telling, letting the truth leak out in wise hints and suggestions, or they tell part of a tale and hoodwink themselves into thinking that they have violated no confidence. Yet nothing is so dangerous as half a truth. It is like pulling one end of a bow-knot. Sooner or later it is inevitable that the hearer will come across the other side, and the cat will be out of the bag.

But some dramatic secrets have so great a fiction interest, or such sensational psychology that one is quite unable to refrain from telling the tale, without names, or localities, perhaps, merely for the story's sake. This is, perhaps, permissible when one really tells for the study of human nature rather than as gossip. It is dangerous always, but a clever person can so distort certain details that the true characters can never be traced. For myself, I would never demand absolute confidence, for I would never tell anything to anybody whose discretion I could not absolutely trust, and a friend can as often aid one by telling at the proper time as by keeping silent.

Some secrets are told only for the purpose of being repeated. What one can not tell one's self one

must get others to tell for one, and this trick is the theme of many a farce. Women understand this perfectly; it is their code, and men laugh at it, feeling themselves superior. The three quickest ways of communication, cynics say, are telephone, telegraph, and tell-a-woman. Women are notoriously fond of secrets; it is their main chance for romance. No man who desires to obtain a woman's affection should forget this. Not that it is necessary to initiate her into your affairs, but you will, as soon as possible, see that something happens which she may consider it wise not to tell. Cement her interest with some lively secret that ties you to her irrevocably, so that she can not come across your photograph or your letter without a knowing smile.

There are those, too, who hold that their own idea of a secret's importance is the excuse for divulgence or defense, but a man of honor will keep the secret of a child as closely as that of an intimate friend. The ass who surrounds his every narration with mystery and takes needless precautions, has his rights, and though you may hear the tale at the next corner you are still bound to silence. Some respect their own secrets but not those of others and have no compunctions against wheedling out a confidence from a weak ac-

quaintance, thereby becoming accessory to the fact of his faithlessness. A secret discovered should be held as sacred as a secret confided.

The desire to tell secrets is one of the most contagious of diseases, and few of us are immune. Some vigorous moral constitutions never succumb, but once an epidemic begins, it is hard work stopping it, and a secret on the rampage is well nigh irresistible. Tell your secret, then, broadcast, and let it have its way until it dies out; or else lock it in your own heart. But above all confide it not to her who asserts that she never has the slightest desire to tell, for there, like a seed sown in fertile ground, it will germinate and flower long after you have forgotten it, aye, and bring forth fruit you never planted.

PART II

The Rationale of the Perverse

WANDERLUST

THE wanderlust is on me and I must go. Not to-morrow, nor even next month, perhaps, but the call has come and sooner or later obey I must. There is no gipsy blood in me; I can settle down and remain contented for a year or so in one place, but then, and usually when I am happiest, with friends, habits and my household gods about me, comes the mysterious mandate that can not be gainsaid. It is like the spell of a magician or the irresistible command of a hypnotist to his patient. My parting is fated. I may obtain a few weeks' grace, but the summons is as powerful as death, and my rest from now on is broken, my life becomes a temporary makeshift until the duty of travel is begun.

The whim is far older than civilization, as old as mankind. All we know of history begins with migration, and ends with it. It has been an incurable fever that has periodically infected men's blood from the earliest stages, sometimes sweeping whole peoples like

a plague, oftener, in modern life, driving the individual from the hive of his fellows. This spirit is conserved in its greatest vigor in Anglo-Saxon blood; elsewhere it is sporadic and erratic.

This lust of roving, the desire for a change of place has, in the English race, resolved itself into two opposite forces whose balanced powers keep our civilization stable. The centrifugal element flings the emigrant from the center to discover and usurp new lands, the centripetal draws him back into the focus of life to increase and vivify the metropolis. In this way has England become Great Britain and a kingdom become an empire. The mother country, a center of energy, has thrown off colonies, as a sun sends whirling satellites to revolve about her. And still, despite this growing family of nations, London has become more truly than ever the pivot of British life and thought.

But it is not for every one to feel these forces. A man may have every opportunity to indulge the passion, possessing wealth and independence, and never know the magic that moves his more sensitive neighbor, never feel this immemorial desire of wandering. The strength of the charm has waned, maybe, and, the earth having been encircled, we are not tempted by undiscovered lands. Rovers, are, no doubt, atavistic.

Perhaps they have not developed so far as those who have taken firmer root.

Nevertheless, the longing, roving instinct is inherent and potential in all during youth. It may be suppressed, gratified or outgrown, but the wanderlust must work in us before manhood at least, if not forever after. It is a part of our national evolution and we as individuals must repeat the history of the race. Every boy who runs away from home testifies to its immortal power. It is his inheritance from the misty ages of his more daring ancestors. We adapt ourselves to environment, willy-nilly, and make the best of circumstances, but the migrating instinct is ready for the first chance to appear and hale us over the plains, over the sea.

It is something more than the mere desire to travel, more than the common wish for change that actuates the vulgar tourist. To him whom the wanderlust allures the yearning comes as keenly as to the migrating bird. While all is warm and pleasant, before the snow falls and the ice freezes, something, somehow, tells the feathered settler to be away. With him there are obvious reasons for the voyage, wonderful as are his premonitions, but with the human rover the impulse is not prudence, not need, nor idle vagary, but a long-

ing, deep as the sea. It is the last ripple of the great wave that sent the primitive Aryan on his long journey round the world.

The butterflies of fashion that flit from watering place to summer resort and along the well-traveled roads of fashionable errantry know nothing of this primal instinct. The rover is for the long, strong flight, for days and nights of travel, for new altitudes, new zones, new stars above him. He must know what it means to be "as far as the east is from the west," he must feel with his own feet the wondrous curve of the globe, he must realize the vastness of space, he must journey past the horizon.

To some the voice calls once, some often echo to the cry. Some hear, but can not answer, some hear and disobey. But, once indulged, the wanderlust is sure to come again. To see loved faces and loved scenes after the lapse of years is as powerful an emotional stimulus as one can get without undue excitement.

But the wanderlust brings things more strange than new sights and sounds. It exercises a new set of feelings. Not love itself, nor suffering either, so separates one's self from the rest of the universe as the motion of travel. Cut off from one's previous world and still unattached to the coming situation, one is, for a

brief instant, apart from everything, without ties while yet with memories and hopes.

And for its last thrill of excitement it has the mystery of revisitation. On one's return one has a dual consciousness. It is the first sight that reveals, not only the well-remembered face or site, but the ill-remembered self who saw it long ago. It is like a glance in a mirror, or rather, at the portrait of one's self painted years before. The shock is too sudden for pain, it is over in a flash, but in that glimpse is ecstasy—a vague something betwixt sorrow and joy.

From the frontier to the capital, from the city to the outpost—there is a life crowded with emotion! To see new, strange countries, to return to the old ground—there is a gamut of sensation! To part and regain, to rove and revisit, to find one's friends still the same and the play always different, to go from art to nature and from instinct back to culture, and, above all, traveling this freshening course of sentiment, to find one's self meanwhile—there is the rapture of the wanderlust!

THE WONDERER

A PLASTER replica of the Lincoln devil perches above my mantel, and behind the ogryllon I have written the motto, "I Wonder Why!" I amuse myself by speculating upon the probable sensations of this sprite when confronted by the inconsistencies of modern manners. But it is not only what he thinks of us that interests me; I am trying to decide what we should think of him and his grotesque ilk.

I was once told that my mind was Gothic. Gothic, I suppose, was meant as opposed to the Greek view of things; the grotesque as opposed to the beautiful, the unique rather than the normal. These two categories may not be philosophically definitive, and yet they are, in a way, descriptive of states of mental appreciation as well as of physical characterization.

The Gothic mind views at an oblique angle of vision—it rejoices in the unfamiliar aspect of things. But it does not necessarily follow that the pleasure is morbid. Surely, to take everything seriously is as one-sided as to take everything humorously or as burlesque. Even

gold must be alloyed with base metals to be of practical use.

To the Greek intellect—the seeker after beauty for its own sake—everything ugly is scorned. Beauty is positive, all else is negative. But to the so-called Gothic mind there are other instincts than the esthetic to satisfy. Rejoicing in beauty, it holds force as higher in the scale of attainment, and mystery, even comedy, perhaps, as highest of all.

The term “grotesque,” derived from the frescoes in Roman grottoes, has come to mean, if not consciously humorous, distorted, crude or exaggerated representations of life. The classic monsters of fable were not, however, meant to be humorous. Originally they were part of an elaborate symbolism. After this occult meaning of soul had gone, they still had life in the pagan belief in them as marvels. This, too, fled, to leave the mere body or form as a decorative accessory in dragons, gryphons and the like; and as such the classic elements still survive. The drawings by the early Christians in the catacombs might as well be called grotesques, conforming to both primary and secondary meaning of the word, and they were sincerely and earnestly intended, however comic they may appear to our educated artistic taste.

So, as the colors of some silks change, from different view-points or from different illuminations, as virtue itself is often ridiculous, the grotesques of a naïf childish faith seem comic to the eyes of art. All visual images appear differently in transmitted and in reflected light. Who can say which is the truer form? We look on life, one might say, by transmitted light when we look with the eyes of faith, seeing the spirit shining through the body. We see by reflected light when we regard a thing esthetically, flooding the picture with our own subjective illumination.

But there is another interpretation of what may be called the Gothic or grotesque view of things. The medieval age was the era of wonders and wonderers. Nowadays, pervaded by the Hellenic spirit of culture, we have well-nigh forgotten how to wonder and can only admire or criticize. We anticipate the flying machine years before it is invented. The miracle becomes almost commonplace. We take each new discovery or invention with an "I told you so!"

But still the Gothic mind (though its possessors be few) loves a marvel, the homelier the better, while the Hellenic seeks only its ideal of pure beauty. The Gothic is the more masculine and virile, rejoicing in the vigor and power which produces a variation from type,

even if that variation or exaggeration is gained at the expense of other qualities. The other, or Greek, view is feminine, if not effeminate, delighting in perfect harmony and poise. For the Goth, shock and forcible conflict—God against Satan, gargoyle against lamb and dove—the animated thrust of springing arch and leap of flying buttress. For the Greek, peace and order—the exquisite repose and perfection of Olympus, the gods all functioned and supreme—the inert, tree-like column supporting with dignity the slumbering architrave.

To the Greek mind the uneasiness of the grotesque is abnormal. But what is the abnormal? Something to be wondered at, says the Goth; and the delight of the wonderer is not in disease or insanity, not in the perversion but in the mystery of its origin. The grotesque challenges him with a problem. It hints at limitations to his philosophy.

Who can not recall the time when all Japanese art was scornfully disposed of as grotesque and unworthy to be taken seriously? We saw in it nothing but incomprehensible perspective, impossible attitudes and incredible costumes. But to-day the Japanese masters stand without reproach as unrivaled in decorative quality and color composition. We have come to find rea-

son in their treatment of art. We know now, too, that their carvings, no matter how bizarre the caprice, are but examples of the universal symbolism of Japanese, and in fact all Oriental art. Not a monkey, nor a dragon, nor a human monster but has its place in a crystallized esthetic and religious code.

So, in one or the other of these two ways may it be with all grotesques, when we use the term in its fuller meaning. Either a new beauty or a new symbolism. The grotesque is merely something misunderstood. Instead of ejaculations of disgust or ridicule, those of my Gothic mind murmur, reflectively, "I wonder why!"

Aubrey Beardsley, seeing life as a grotesque, used for his elements, instead of the heraldic griffin, sphynx and lion rampant, dowagers, fops and coquettes. Dickens accented his stories with social grotesques in much the same way. The drama could not exist without such exaggerations. For the grotesque is the development of one trait so far that it is out of drawing. It is a reduction to absurdity, as the mathematicians say.

Wonder, then, that the forgotten art kept alive in the Gothic mind, is far more than a primitive, childish awe, or a love of mystery. In the natural grotesque the modern wonder marvels, not emotionally, but intellectually. Here, we will say, is an old woman painted

and bedecked with ridiculously vain cunning. To you, the Greek, she is merely hideous, but to the Goth a thing rather to wonder at than despise. She is a psychological study. How can she imagine that she can charm by these patent falsities and caricatures of youth? She is wonderful! More, she is a symbol of something universal. She is vanity.

It goes without saying that these two simple categories overlap and blend. The Greek may analyze ugliness and find it tintured with truth, the Goth may yearn for the ideal beauty. Both may meet half-way between the sublime and the ridiculous and appreciate the pathetic. But the Goth knows the better the meaning of the words, "I wonder why!"

WHERE IS FANCY BRED?

IF you empty the common sense out of a man's brain what is left? Instinct, you may say, but instinct is rather a part of the very blood than of the brain—it is a sort of intellectual reflex action. The residue in the brain we may call fancy, seeing that it is man's *uncommon* sense.

Fancy and the imagination have been variously defined. Coleridge and Wordsworth and Poe have each analyzed the two terms, and, though they differ somewhat in their opinions as to the relative importance of the two functions and as to their proper scope, it is pretty well understood of fancy, at least, that in its processes of forming ideas it is less bound by rational modes of thought. Fancy moves on a lighter wing; it is governed by laws of association remote from common sense; it is arbitrary and capricious; it develops startling contrasts and caprices; it delights in the unexpected.

Coleridge says that fancy combines and imagination creates; but his explanation does not disagree with the

above distinction made by Wordsworth. Poe asserted that neither, properly speaking, created, since all the elements used must come from experience merely used in unusual combinations; his distinction was that imagination must have a secondary suggestive meaning—or what we vaguely term the moral sentiment, applicable to human conduct.

A trace of fancy we all have, no doubt. Each of us has his vagaries or thoughts that leap outside of conscious experience. It is like the minute quantity of gold-salt that is always found in sea water. Slight as its importance or utility appears to be, this hidden precious particle acts and reacts in most of our affairs. For fancy has more than a literary value. It not only creates brilliant images, but, acting as an unnoticed cause, it spurs us in many accustomed pursuits.

If we turn this tiny jewel of fancy toward the light we see many different facets. Its effects and color may be illustrated by many illustrations and metaphors. Imagination is a mosaic of bits of life arranged in pattern—fancy has its own design, its own mysterious origin, as beautiful and as surprising as a snow crystal. Imagination is like a lofty building reared to meet the sky—fancy is a balloon that soars at the wind's will. Fancy is to imagination as dream is to reverie, as play

is to work, as smoking is to eating, as mathematics is to history, as humor is to precept, as love is to friendship, as the Book of Revelations is to the Book of Proverbs.

Perhaps these similes may illustrate the functions of the two processes in our daily life, and whether my definition of fancy is correct or not, there is at least, a fundamental difference between the terms of each of these antitheses. One is symbolized by the boy playing at marbles, the other by the girl playing with her doll. One is the radical idealistic force in the human couple, the other the conservative and practical. One persists ever in a wilful experiment and novel essay, the other works toward a more immediate and accessible goal.

Fancy has usually been considered a lower form of imagination, something childish, impracticable and futile, if not actually mischievous. Ruskin says fancy is like a squirrel, content to whirl the wheel of his cage, while imagination, like a pilgrim, must perforce walk the earth. Even by Wordsworth, who first marked its limits as being more vague and airy, fancy is considered something less than imagination. But is this a proper conception? Fancy, like my grain of gold in

sea water, is to be traced in all great work. Increase this sane percentage and the work is overbalanced, a saturated solution of fancy makes madness. But fancy is an inspiration; it is the spring that sets off the imagination, as the trigger fires the gun; it is an impulse from a world outside. As the wild notions of alchemy started scientific chemical research, as the dogmatic asservation of astrology set Galileo on his voyage of celestial discovery, as the fountain of youth led Ponce De Leon into a new continent, so has fancy ever furnished the seed for growths beyond itself.

What is the mainspring of love, if not a sudden illogical desire, a divine fastidiousness, a mythical, impossible soul incarnated by a dreamer into an accessible human body? The damsel "in maiden meditation fancy free" is still in possession of her common sense—see how the old world "fancy" bears me out!

In literature the force of fancy's initiative is clear in all of the books that have stood the test of time. The *Arabian Nights' Entertainment* is sheer fancy, and the immortal popularity of these tales is a sure proof that fancy pure and simple is no secondary function of the intellect. In *Gulliver's Travels* we have, perhaps, fancy and imagination combined in a better pro-

portion—with the result that as long as the language endures this book will live. The initial impetus was fancy. Given, a nation of individuals much larger or much smaller than we are—there is your fancy. To prove again, with these fanciful elements, the great truths of human nature—there is your imagination. The political satire which justified it in its beginning has rotted away, and the story, loved for the story's sake, has endured.

As we look at love and literature, so we may look at religion. The same force is at work, call it what you will. Increase the modicum, and, as you get insanity from the exaggeration of fancy, so you get superstition from religion. The earliest ideas of the supernal world were all sheer fancy; for fancy, and not imagination, is characteristic of childhood, whether we regard it in the race or the individual.

So the child in us survives. The same extraneous force that leads the boy to imagine a chair a locomotive, and from that superimposed condition to ratiocinate along the lines of his experience, is to be seen in works of art. It is the essence of play to assume something and then proceed rationally. The premise is fancy, the deduction imagination. This method is well illustrated in comic opera. Accept as fact that a per-

son is a "mascot" or a half fairy, as in *Iolanthe*, and the rest is all logic.

If all this is true, should it not prove that the work of fancy is more enduring than that of the imagination? It is a recognized fact that the "novel of manners" can not keep its popularity except during the era in which the manners of which it treats are understood. *The Arabian Nights* and *Gulliver's Travels* have proved what salt fancy has to keep books fresh, though *Robinson Crusoe* would seem to disprove the theorem. But, realistic as it is to the point of torture, *Crusoe* is as far out of our experience as the scenes of Bagdad, and, as such, appeals to fancy. So will Kipling's *Jungle Book* last when his other stories are regarded as merely literary curiosities.

Fancy, though in some manifestations like intuition, is not anarchistic. It leaps away from logic, but it follows its own creative laws. It endures in poetry, in music, where it is freest and safest, in myth and folklore, not the product of an epoch, but of the immemorial yearning for emancipation from custom and habit in thought. Architecture, the noblest work of imagination, decays; but fancy, the immortal part of us, misunderstood, ill-controlled, is a fire that shall always find fuel. It is the eternal, irresistible desire to

create something wholly unmodified by temporary environment, local color, or the chance effect of light and shade. It is the grasp of the child for something beyond his reach, the quest of the star in some world beyond our ken.

THE DIVINE FASTIDIOUSNESS

WE LEARN the art of loving as we do all other arts, by practise and experience. One must be a genius to do it well at first sight. Poets have conspired to throw a glamour over the initial essay, however, and we are used to thinking of it with romantic enthusiasm. We are told, for instance, that we know nothing worth while save what we learned during the brief hour of youthful love.

The first passion has, of course, a freshness and beauty that we can not deny. It is abandoned, reckless, thoughtless; and yet, if the truth be told, it is very easily contented. It embodies its ideals in the form that comes nearest to hand. It is the victim of propinquity. We remember our puppy-loves with a tear, perhaps, but nevertheless with a smile, too, for the lost illusion. It served, while it lasted, as an escape valve for our mounting emotions, but it did not much matter upon whom its force was spent. It was pretty, but was it art?

Most persons have loved at least thrice. We must

leave out of the question the victims of ordinary domestic bliss, and those who are content to let well enough alone, concerning ourselves with those who are not married, or who have married late, for these are the true artists. The initiation admits one to a world of faery; we enter through that simple first love, and are surprised to find what mysteries lie beyond. Enlightened, we take another degree in wonder, and at last, knowing now what may be, but realizing the rarity of the impossible, we calmly but rather hopelessly await the ineffable. In first love we learn power, in second, perhaps, we learn skill. And in the last we combine both with a divine fastidiousness to make life marvelous.

Why should we expect to learn the whole creed of love from a single lesson, or from a single master? It is not often that we find one person who makes the triple appeal of mental, moral and physical attraction. We may love a bright but homely woman, but, sweet as that may be, it is certainly not the poetic ideal of love, for the perfect woman is beautiful. So we may surrender to the charms of one who is clever and unscrupulous, or even to a beautiful and stupid girl. Each one teaches something of the divine mystery, but what poet would call either experience ideal?

Like a poem, love should, to become a classic, embody a noble meaning intelligently expressed in beautiful form.

But, even when these three attributes are blended, when the man and the woman are perfectly mated, when Daphnis meets Chloe, there is a finesse, a knowledge of the game, an artistic training that is necessary to make of a passion a poem. It is not so easy to make love well, as most persons think!

Women usually understand this better than men. They have given the subject more profound thought, for it is said to be their whole existence. They are, in short, oftener of the artistic temperament and can "see color," can appreciate nuances, can criticize technique. No matter how much they may love, they are still more in love with loving. If they will not always admit, they are always able to see, just where their lovers fall short in their business. Women know every move; they resent false strokes, slight discords and blunders. Mortification they can not forgive. There is a stage of the game between wooing and winning that most women would have indefinitely prolonged. The finer of them are idealists and abhor definiteness. They live for the glory of the relation and not for its immediate advantage or concrete enjoyment. They

live in to-morrow and not to-day—and often in a to-morrow that they hope will never come.

All this a man succeeds in learning, after a while, and, if he is worthy, he grows adept in the art of wringing from the moment all that it holds, instead of plunging on to reach a definite end. Not to miss any one of the subtle, transient moods of feeling—that is the reward of love at thirty-five. For most men must have a marvel, patent and notorious. They think that the black art of the Indian fakir, who makes a grain of wheat grow to full maturity in a few minutes, is more wonderful than the development of the same seed in the warm bosom of mother earth, with its slow and gradual evolution of sprout and stalk, leaf, bud and blossom.

This difference of desire is the cause of much of the misunderstanding between lovers, but occasionally a man understands the woman's belief that every stage on the way is wonderfully interesting, and sometimes a woman understands the man's belief that that progress in affection is not a limited journey toward a finite end, but that, no matter how fast one goes, the goal is infinitely distant.

Growing older, we demand more; more strength and more delicacy of expression. Love, like music, has

its overtones, its chords and harmonies. It is not unaccompanied melody, as we thought in our youthful days when we were content to whistle upon an oaten reed in the green fields of innocence,—when a braid of hair and a saucy look sufficed us. Now we need the interweaving of themes; we feel the appeal of differing manifestations of sexual attraction. But these subtleties of feeling do not efface the primary impulse, any more than an accompaniment effaces the singer's air. They are but the psychological reflexes and echoes. If our heart is satisfied, should our joy be the less because our brains also take their share of pleasure?

It is not till late that these refinements of possibility are understood. One person shows us one side and another a different illumination, and she who is falsest may know the best what love should be. So, bit by bit, one's ideal is built up, and she who teaches us how to love is as great as she who loves us. And then, if some one steps forth from the shadow to embody that ideal, her claim is announced, not by wonderful coincidences of opinion or taste, but by trifles, light as air, by which all else is interpreted.

It does not mean half so much, then, that we both appreciate Brahms or Wagner, that we hold the same

social prejudices or have the same polite code, as that, on that first evening I met you, you reached out your hand for an unmentioned book at the precise instant of time when I was about to hand it to you—that you never take sugar in your coffee—that you, too, have always loved and understood that line in Stevenson's fable: "And in my thought one thing is as good as another, in this world, and a shoe of a horse will do!"

For love is but the ultimate refinement of sentiment. It is romance, freed from the obvious methods of romance. It is an infinity so great that even the most divine of human moods and situations fail to express it perfectly. And so it is that we do not need dramatic situations or tense moods of feeling—neither moonlight in Italy nor double suicides—to embody its ideals. It is so great that mere trifles will serve as well. A glance may be as full of meaning as the most fervid caress. No detail is too trifling to symbolize its magic mysteries. A shoe of a horse will do!

THE SPIRIT OF THE RACE

COULD I have my one dearest, most impossible, wish granted, I think I should choose to have a talk with Methuselah. I do not mean the patriarch, the son of Enoch, but some modern representative, blessed with his years, and gifted, we must suppose, with a proportionate amount of wisdom. Think of the experience of a man nine hundred and sixty-nine years of age! He would have to have been born in the year of our Lord 934, and, if an Englishman, while Æthelstan sat on the throne of Britain. What dynasties he would have seen rise and fall, what races he would have watched fighting, dominating and assimilating in his native land!

But it would not be as a mere historian that I would care to listen to his conversation. Did the young Shem (who was nineteen when the old man died) ask his great-grandfather of wars and chieftains, of the way to herd sheep and the customs of the Land of Nod, or of the giants that were in the earth in those days? No doubt he did; but I would care little for such tales. I have many more intimate and personal con-

fessions to wring from him! I would ask him about myself—and Celestine.

For my modern Methuselah would stand for the Spirit of the Race, as Schopenhauer names it—and, even more, for the Spirit of Human Nature, and would be able to perceive the essential differences between epochs. As it is now, without him, the best we can do is mere conjecture. We assume that human nature has changed but little in a thousand years; but still, that doctrine is as unprovable—yet as useful, too—as the wave theory of light, or the atomic theory of matter. It is the principle upon which all interpretation of history rests. Taking it by and large, the hypothesis is undoubtedly true. And yet, when we analyze the history of manners, we are confronted by two almost contradictory tendencies. We find surprising likenesses and differences. The present is both friend and foe to the past.

Human emotions are evolved, are they not? While the great impulses, such as love, hatred, jealousy, selfishness and bigotry do not change materially, yet in the best specimens of the race these grosser passions are gradually refined, and more delicate ones developed. In time mankind has grown, on the whole, more subtle, more altruistic, more self-conscious and analyt-

ical. We think we are indubitably more sensitive and charitable, and we point to our hospitals and asylums and schools as evidence. A few leaders, we think, struggle out of the mist of superstition and the darkness of egoism, and progressing, lift out the rest. In this sense we consider that we are different from our far-off forebears, in that we are more at one with each other. We call it civilization. The standard, at least, is different, whether it is higher or not.

But, on the other hand, we see that all so-called development is cyclic. The old fashions recur, the ends of the centuries resemble one another, ancient eras of low morals are duplicated in modern times, new conditions are found, upon investigation, to be but replicas of bygone situations. We quote the Preacher, "There is no new thing under the sun." The pendulum of time brings the race inevitably back to the old points.

It is easy enough to understand that, in the case of the race, these two points of view may be reconciled, for we have only to remember that cyclic development is truly illustrated, not by the pendulum, but by the helix, the form of the screw. Thus, though we come round again and again to the same view-point, each revolution takes us a step higher. But how are we

to apply this to human nature? Is our own blind fury at a wrong done to ourselves any different from the fury of Cain against Abel? We give way to pride, to jealousy, and to love as did men of yore, perhaps not with such abandon, but the spirit of the impulse is the same. And were there not men of piety, charity and loving-kindness of old? What, then, is different? What is true modernity? Methuselah alone can tell us!

What we think of, perhaps, as most typical of our time, what seems to be unique, is the growing difference in the relations between the sexes, culminating in the conditions prevalent in the United States. Was such frank comradeship and equality without sentiment ever possible before? Certain phases of French and Greek history suggest an analogy, but, if so, the swing of the pendulum is wide indeed! It seems impossible to conceive of such modern sexless familiarity between men and women as possible ever before in the world. The influence of sex has been the one unchanging factor that has underlain the history of mankind, for it is the Spirit of Race itself, seeking self-perpetuation. Have we then, in the West, a phase of human nature being developed that even Methuse-

lah himself would not understand? Would he be able to advise me in regard to my friendship with Celestine?

For, of all subjects, it is certainly of women that I would talk to him. I would show him a few—not many—of my friends, and say, “Was there ever her like before?” Perhaps he knew one when he was a youngster of three hundred and fifty; if so, what a talk could we not have! How many things he could explain! It turns my head to think of it!

For each one of us occasionally stumbles across a marvel. We have all been actors or witnesses at situations that seemed impossible. My instinctive cry, then, is for that wise old man. Oh, would he understand? What balm would be his talk, with anecdote of this or that strange woman, to illustrate a quirk of femininity! How delicious his story of my own ancestor, some twenty generations removed, who acted so strangely like me on his day of days!

For he would know me, too, that weird old man, and see a thousand forebears in me. A trick of the hand here, a weak yielding of the brain there, and he would put me together, a composite of his old-time acquaintances. He would watch the atavism appear, but, bewildered by such a mixture of innumerable qual-

ities, how could he ever predict my actions? Perhaps he would talk to me as eagerly as I to him, curious to see how John and Tristram, Peleg, Hannah and Ethelwyn warred within my blood.

But, really, it does not matter. Life is wonderful enough. With him to talk to, I would marvel that certain things could happen twice in an eon, and he would doubtless say, "Is this violet you have discovered any less beautiful when you think that there are myriads of flowerets as fair?" So, without him, when the impossibly strange or the incredibly perfect thing happens, I make my wish as one who sees the flight of a falling star, and thank Heaven that I can glory in the wonder of it.

BLACK COFFEE

NOTHING we drink is quite so dark as black coffee. See how the liquid in the cup forms a little concave mirror, in which is reflected the light over the table! By tipping the cup, or agitating it slightly, the image of the lamp dances in and out of wonderful arabesque patterns, filling the circle with queer designs like Japanese mons. They flash in changing shapes, one melting into another with the rapidity of lightning, a fascinating network of zigzag lines.

So, too, for one sensitive to a certain sort of coffee intoxication, there is a mental arabesque of quaint thoughts that is stirred into life by the stimulus of the beverage. Coffee occasionally has the curious effect of magnifying common things and of making slight moods and incidents picturesque. In the coarser and grosser emotions of every day the finer, subtler essences of life escape us, blotted out by occurrences of greater importance, as the stars are blotted out by the sun. But some conditions magnify or distort these

lesser wonders, and attract our attention vividly to unconsidered trifles of thought. The dark, for instance, is such a medium, casting an occult ray upon fancies we are usually unconscious of. So, too, is the influence of sex capable of coloring our mood, and we think quicker and talk better. Under the spell of music we often lose ourselves in vagaries, and spin fantasies of cobweb imaginings. And so, in its own curious way, does black coffee at times induce abnormal mental states, finer and more elusive than the intoxication of alcohol, more nearly resembling the restless intellectual exaltation of physical fatigue.

But these tiny impalpable thoughtlets are with us all the time, no doubt, though we do not notice them in their subconscious field of play. So, too, are the motes of dust present continually in the air we breathe and look through. Darken your room, however, and admit but a single shaft of sunshine, and behold these vagrom inconsequent atoms of matter writhe before your eyes, compelling your regard! The air is strangely populated with life and activity, space is filled where you thought only emptiness existed, and particles undreamed of swim into your ken. In the same way does the microscope reveal new worlds for us to marvel at. Every drop of water swarms with

infinite energy. Size, then, becomes merely relative, life is present in and through everything. What is real, and what fancy? Who can say?

We can not, of course, endure the intensity of feeling necessary to comprehend or consciously to think of this every time we drink or listen or breathe. We must use the telescope, too, at times, and seek out truths of a higher order. But to all who feel keenly, and live thoroughly, the microscopic mood must come at times, whether they drink coffee to induce it or not.

There is a natural reaction in all extremes. One can scarcely be simple without being subtle, too, for then one plays, like a child, pretending, for the nonce, that details are important, reasoning about trifles, studying them, to discover laws and shades of meaning. One can not be possessed of a true sense of humor without being serious in purpose as well, for it takes as much skill and concentration of force to manipulate jackstraws as to juggle heavy weights. But to the common herd any given incident is of a certain definite grade of importance; it will hold just so much sentiment or feeling or pleasure, and no more. Things are of themselves sad, absurd or ugly, and can be nothing else, no matter how one regards them. But the finer mind is constantly varying its altitude, look-

ing over and overlooking, looking under and understanding things.

Nothing is of itself important or meaningless. One can invest insignificant minutiae with new values (as when one finds a tone of voice more pregnant than the words embodying it), or one can discover seemingly large and obviously remarkable actions to be mere accidents of conduct (as when one finds a favor less valuable through having a lower or lesser motive than has some common friendly sacrifice). We must become alternately Lilliputians and Brobdingnagians to keep alive to all that is vital.

But to produce this posture, this delicate, sensitive alertness of mental action by artificial means, is dangerous. Like any other complicated piece of mechanism, the human body and the human brain is constructed to run at a certain normal or natural rate of speed, with a certain amount of fuel. Like any other machine, if this velocity is intensified, the whole apparatus is racked and strained, if not ruined. As children love to pull the clock weights to make the wheels move faster, so men stimulate their systems with intoxicants for the love of excitement that swifter living produces. And so even this cup of black coffee may have its dangers.

Yet, it is not this exotic mental state that is wrong; it is merely the method of producing it. We are all fond of excitement, for excitement is but a form of wonder. Wonder is the eager regard of the mysterious or the novel in life, the thrill of joy or astonishment at the new thing, whether it be the novelty of seeing well-known persons in new situations, or new persons in well-known situations. The novelty in subtleties is the discovery of great laws governing small occurrences, or great occurrences in the control of small familiar rules. It sometimes takes a deal of living to discover the importance of our childhood's maxims; we pass through tremendous sufferings, and find that all we have learned is that "a stitch in time saves nine." Intoxication paints life in new colors as wonderfully though often less valuably. It is the cheap and easy way to Wonderland. It admits one to mysteries, but it is the illegitimate sister of Imagination, the mother of Insanity. None the less it is wonderful.

However, we are more than mere pieces of mechanism, for we are not automatic. We are moved by something outside of ourselves, and, when properly adjusted and poised, responsive to something we call Truth, whether we appreciate it as great or small. Let

us compare ourselves rather to magnetic compasses, whose sensitized needles are mysteriously drawn to some secret magnetic pole. We can simulate this attraction by artificial means, and cause interesting aberrations of our ordinary psychical state by the use of stimulants, in the same way that the sensitized needle may be drawn about by moving a piece of iron in its magnetic field. But with such extraordinary influence, of course, the instrument is rendered less sensitive to the finer and more delicate of natural impulses. In its natural, rightful state it perceives with accuracy the tiniest promptings of the subtle forces which radiate from the mysterious North.

No more coffee, then, thank you—I think this one cup has been quite sufficient for my present purpose; I have been subtle long enough.

THE GARGOYLE'S KIN

IF THERE is anything in the doctrine of reincarnation, I must have skipped the Renaissance. It came when my day of life was done and time had come for rest. While Art was awakening in Italy, I, with my Gothic ideals, was falling asleep in Devachan, clasping a gargoyle to my breast. The great light of modernity rose over Europe and I never knew, nor even dreamed. And now I am aroused too late for participation in that morning's thrill. It is already high noon.

For we must all instinctively, even unconsciously, choose our own in matters of art as we do in questions of friendship. The foundations of taste are builded on the unseen mysteries of character too deeply to be explained. Why one is drawn to Egypt and another to Polynesia is as dark a secret as why friends marry as they do—as unsolvable as another's choice of raiment.

We each have a sort of esthetic compass within us, pointing toward the particular pole about which our

emotions revolve. Education, environment and personal magnetism, however, all affect this sensitive needle, and it is often drawn aside. We are told, for instance, that Japanese art is wonderfully to be admired, and our tastes are violently forced in that direction. We are condemned for liking primary colors, and recommended to the tones of faded canvas, the texture and line of sackcloth. We are at the hazard of many didactic disturbances, but, despite all this, our needle asserts itself in time, for it is moved by a subtler, stronger force than precept or example. The oft-quoted Philistine who doesn't "know much about art, but does know what he likes," is reflected in us all. A Jew may learn to eat pork, but it is not his proper food, for all that.

So there is an intrinsic trend of taste for every one who is gifted with emotions. We are attracted, repelled or indifferent. We recognize a kinship between another's purpose and our own sympathetic delight. We may have been groping in the dark, or exploring a gallery of horrors, not knowing what we sought, when, of a sudden, we encounter our own kind of thing, something our own hearts illuminate spontaneously, and we are profoundly satisfied at last. It may be nothing that conforms to the conventions of good

taste. But it is ours, none the less. Many are the occult canons of one's secret likes.

Beauty is not objective, despite the efforts of thousands of dogmatists to make it so. Beauty is a form of emotional energy. It is a divine electricity; it has its polarity and vibrations, its conductors and non-conductors. And it has its shocks and sparks, too, when the esthetic impulse leaps across space, and tears through intellect, seeking, in one bright flash of joy to find its interpreter and establish the circuit in a current of emotion. You or I may not be affected by this or that particular work of art, for we are keyed to a different pitch of feeling, but we may watch in another's face the lightning smile and hear the breaking of his soul in thunder when like meets like.

What strange actions and reactions are set up in travel, we all know. Even before we start, we are prescient, and say, "I shall love Italy and loathe Switzerland!" We feel, in anticipation, unreasoned preferences for particular nations, special epochs, single schools.

So we pick and choose, too, not only from the vast treasures of the beautiful, but from other emotions as well. For we are not all endowed with a deep or sincere passion even for the beautiful of our own or-

der. The esthetic qualities of things merge one into another by insensible degrees, and as our taste selects between different kinds of beauty, so our feeling selects between different emotions, of which beauty is but one sort. The gamut runs through the pathetic, the awful, terrible, and horrible to ugliness itself, and thence round the circle through the grotesque and comic side back to pathos and beauty again. Any one quality may make its especial appeal.

Indeed, it was not beauty which, in nature or art, first laid hold on me. I did not notice, as a child, the tender charm of a landscape; but if it contained awfulness, as a mountain crest in cloud—or terror, as the wolf-like charges of angry surges on the shore—or horror, as the sheer fierce fall of a perpendicular cliff—then my soul was moved in wonder. It would be scarcely just to say that I enjoyed ugliness, but a certain grotesque sort moved me, not only with a mere intellectual interest, but with a distinctly emotional appeal. It was an unreasoned comprehension of the purpose impelling the manifestation.

And so, feeling an inborn taste for this tart tang in art, this wild, unkempt habit in stone, I can not breathe freely the air of the Renaissance. My era was that of a harsher, sterner effort. Dark ages, if you like,

but eras of dream and vision as well, and haunted by black spirits and gray. We did not try to explain our ideals in human terms; the flying buttress, the springing arch, and the monstrous ogrillon were of a more passionate symbolism, awe and aspiration, fault and fancy rather than the consciousness of perfected design. The priestcraft still guarded its lore.

Yes, the Renaissance, with all its humanistic marvels, leaves me cold. Its rhythms, proportions and ratios, its ordered fenestration, its modules and harmonies, its reflexes of ancient ideals, its concrete visualizations of myth and legend—even the fine enthusiasm and buoyancy one reads into it in every direction, letters, social science, commerce and discovery—all seem too literal and specific to awaken in me anything but a mere cool observation of results.

To have been a part of all this upspringing life, this assertion of free personality—oh! that would have been wonderful. I can understand it all, intellectually, and feel the last soundless reverberations of that bell-like call to endeavor. But it is all accomplished, and I can not share the Renaissance with my eyes alone. My hands itch for participation; and I did never carve a classic capital, I know.

But with the mystic sublimity of the Gothic art my

touch is livelier. There are still spirits imprisoned in the cold gray stone for such as I! The perpendicular uplifts of wall, the arcs of vaulted roofs are based on something that is deep-seated in my soul as well. The lost secret of foliated tracery, and, still more, the lore of uncouth gargoyles seems at times almost ready to be divulged to me, could I but dream that dream again.

So the mysteries of taste lie pregnant or fallow in our inner selves. For you, Florence, for me, Oxford, and for another, perhaps, the geometric charms of the Alhambra. There is no first, no last, in the law of esthetics.

And, so thinking, the fancy came to me of one even more crass and ignorant than I, narrow, provincial, from St. Louis or Milwaukee, maybe, his esthetic sense never yet awakened, who, happening in Paris, fellowed for an hour with the stone monsters of Notre Dame. A barren, sordid soul, hitherto dead to any fine altruistic emotion, what thrill of feeling might not come to him—what undeveloped power kindle at sight of these unheard-of beasts carved by the daring, wondering hands of the dark ages? How the very mystery of their creation, incomprehensible to so many, might speak to him and awaken him even from esthetic

death. Beauty, poetry and music might have failed to pierce his soul, but, hearing this message aright, feeling the assertion of an affinity that no lesson in his barren Anglo-Saxon West had taught, he would crouch shamefacedly at this whisper from the past. Idle vagrom fancies long denied, crude dreams disowned would overcome him, and, knowing now that men had seen his visions, and dared to give them utterance, he might go down a new man—he and I of the same cult!

THE FRUIT OF THE MOMENT

NOTHING, perhaps, is so hard to define as pleasure, which is usually considered the most important thing in the world. Not only does it vary as between individuals, but it varies with the individual. Any given act may be pleasant to some and painful to others, and also it may be to any one person sometimes pleasant and sometimes painful. There is no constant quantity of sensation which we may employ as a unit of pleasure in estimating enjoyment or dis-ease.

Pleasure is a variable quality of things, and is subtly affected by mysterious tides and currents. On the Fahrenheit thermometer, you will remember, the "boiling point" of water is placed at two hundred and twelve degrees. But this is, of course, the temperature at which water will boil at sea level. If one ascends a mountain, the boiling point falls. If there were such a thing as a pleasurometer to mark degrees of emotion or enjoyment, we would find something analogous to be true. Pain being the negative of pleasure, we may imagine an

apparatus showing one at the bottom, the other at the top of a scale. At intervals might be placed Agony, Discomfort, Annoyance, Boredom, Peace, Enjoyment, Rapture, and so on. But it would, after all, be a sliding scale, needing constant adjustment; and if we took the neutral mark, half-way between pleasure and pain, as our boiling point, we would find that it shifted, according to our mental altitude, as the thermometer's boiling point shifts according to physical altitude.

The mere question of health is, perhaps, the most important factor affecting our pleasure. To the invalid confined to his bed the slightest movement is agony. When he is well he rejoices in exertion and exercise. The act is the same act in either case, but it does not contain the same quantity of pleasure at one time as at another. The hardy Anglo-Saxon's ideal of pleasure is violent exertion, a prolonged strain of the muscles, a determined test of endurance. He climbs the mountain with an incredible expense of fatigue, he pierces the tropic jungle, he explores polar ice, suffering, starving, roasting or freezing; and he calls this sport. How can one analyze such enjoyment as this, which at first glance seems plainly to be nothing but pain?

The Englishman will tell you, doubtless, that all his

suffering is repaid by the moment of achievement, the first flash of success, or, if not success, the satisfaction of accomplishing a definite plan. The author struggles as manfully, and suffers, in his travail of bookbirth, in his agonies of creation, mental throes as keen as the physical tortures of the explorer. Why does he so suffer? What desire urges him to such pain? He thinks, no doubt, that the satisfaction of completing his work is sufficient reward, and that the something which bids him toil on is the word "finis." But this can not be so. There is one thing more.

The pleasure of pleasures is being in love. Moralists will tell us, no doubt, that being in love is but a triumph of egoism, the climax of vanity, the pinnacle of the pride of individual exclusive possession. But, nevertheless, we have a majority on our side when we say that being in love is, after all, as near earthly bliss as is possible, and it is the majorities who make the dictionaries. And if we take sides with the poets, rather than with those who preach a more rarified ethics, we may perhaps learn something of where pleasure lies.

The old allegorical picture of the Pursuit of Pleasure is, however obvious, a fine bit of satire. We do,

indeed, pursue pleasure, and see it usually just beyond our grasp. We are so used to considering actions as separate from results, that we instinctively work for the end's sake rather than for the work's sake. Is this not futile? What is, after all, really worth while of itself in this wild, whirling world? What reward, when given, is more than dust in the mouth? The rewards of effort are proverbially meager, and usually attained too late for enjoyment.

The lesson in this is easy. We are to derive our enjoyment, not solely from the reward, but from the effort; we are to take our pleasure, not only in the destination, not only upon the summit, but at every step on the road.

"Not the quarry, but the chase,
Not the laurel, but the race,
Not the hazard, but the play—
Make me, Lord, enjoy alway!"

Is it not so, too, with love? And yet what impatient lover understands! To him there is a definite climax of achievement, a moment of capture and surrender, a concrete gain. He considers the kiss as rapture, and all that fine delicate emotion and counterplay of

desires and sympathies, of vibrations and magnetic waves, of subtle psychical reactions, as merely the preparatory effort—something necessary, but to be got through with as soon as possible!

This he thinks; but he does not know, for, were it really so, he would never have attained the kiss, or the hand. So does the mountain climber consider his struggle upward as toil, and his conquest of the topmost peak the moment of his reward. But it is not so. Did he not enjoy every step, and rejoice in it, he would never reach the top. Surely he must enjoy it so, even though he be mistaken in his analysis. For he may win a victory in precisely the reverse way. Suppose, after climbing almost to the top, the strain becomes so great that the pain far outbalances the pleasure, or that a return would bring a greater satisfaction than a dogged persistency. If he be a true man he will have the courage to retrace his steps, and not win a futile and barren reward at the crest.

To take each step on the way with thoroughness, and with conscious joy in the taking of it, that is living one's life intelligently and sanely and to the best advantage. Not to be confused by the conventional ideas of pleasure, but to see how enjoyment is distributed finely and evenly throughout all effort, rather

than in one nugget—to believe that life, day by day, is an adventure—there is a preventive against disappointment and disillusion.

The old legend has it that the Fates, in planning men's acts, assigned a certain, definite amount of happiness to each sequence of events, and any actor might choose how he should be paid. He might enjoy either in anticipation, or in achievement, or in memory; but if he distributed the payments amongst the three, one payment would diminish the others, for the three instalments must inevitably add up to the same sum at the end.

But a more fitting allegory would teach that pleasure can not be hoarded with miserly craft, to be spent or wasted in riotous bliss. If we try that—and how often have we not tried!—we are always disappointed. Pleasure, the legitimate reward of effort, is an interest that is regularly paid. We must spend it or waste it; we can not save it up against a rainy day. It behooves us to collect it, therefore, to the last farthing, day by day.

And so, whether we love, or toil, or war; to be thorough—that is, to see clearly and enjoy wittingly the delight of the moment—is the true recompense of endeavor. Not to arrive, but to move in the right

direction, is happiness. For happiness is a term that we do know something about; it is a gift of the gods that never fails, while pleasure, the inconsequent, irrelevant, fatuous, unearned increment of life, is a delusion of man's brains.

THE BURDEN OF BEAUTY

BEAUTY is not its own excuse for being, I am quite sure. At least, not all beauty. There is an overwhelming, compelling, vibrant sort that needs other than its own justification, and depends usually upon symbolism. This is the beauty that can not be passively enjoyed, but exacts its tribute of active participation from every beholder.

The grander and more elaborate of the Gothic cathedrals are of this sort of beauty. The cathedrals of Milano and Cologne, for instance, are dominant, esthetic tyrants of the eye. They levy their toll on the emotions, as the beadle his on the purse; you can not escape looking and wondering, yes, and suffering, any more than you can willingly escape the sight of a great fire.

Such marvels exhaust, if they do not affright. A monument of this bewildering beauty, and such infinite elaboration, drive one to seek relief in homelier sights. One can only look and look, trying to appreciate and understand and enjoy. But it is too much.

To digest such a mass of beauty demands too much. The effort to appraise its value intellectually, to make the hurried most of a wondrous opportunity is baffling, and one turns away to hide one's head.

So we travel over seas and mountains, spending time and money to find this monstrous beauty not ministering to us, but oppressing us, not our servant or actor, but our master, the million-eyed, staring observer of our own littleness. And so, shrunk in spirit, convicting ourselves of Philistinism, we slink away to the lesser joys of travel reproaching ourselves in whispers.

Are we necessarily at fault, then? Has beauty a right to demand so much of us? Is it not, in its essence, a giver of rest? We have mistaken wonder and elaboration and size for beauty, and fancy that we must worship at every shrine. Here, at Milano, is a forest of pinnacles, but it has not the dignity of the forest. It bears two thousand statues on its walls and roofs, but by them we are troubled as by an insistent crowd. The wealth of carving, in crotchet and gargoyle, tracery and molding, swells the sum of its value so that we can but grasp and stupidly whip up our minds to pull and carry a comprehension of this exquisite load.

We are dazed and conscious, as if we dined with

Royalty. It is a surfeit of sweets, where one can select no one item for enjoyment. The thousands of unseen details join the grand chorus, the multiplex harmonies rise like odors.

This is the very horror of beauty. Psychology tells us that all pleasant sensations, if prolonged or intensified, drop, and finally become knowable only as pain. So Cologne cathedral can torture me with its exquisite perfection, its transcendent refinements. It is as if too great beauty made men mad.

Yet nature never torments us so. Is it because we know we can not, and so do not try to, understand, taking our pleasure simply as a child does? No doubt. We do not attempt to comprehend the ocean, nor a woman's fair face. We accept it as beauty simply, never thinking to wonder. Our blessing of beauty so comes net and clean, and there is no need to worry over laws and values, and whether we are or are not extracting every possible marvel from the sight. We do not attempt to apply history, art, literature, poetry, romance, politics, and what-not, as we find ourselves doing with the cathedral, as we cast our differently-colored mental fires upon its walls. No, ah, no! The gleam of the moonray on the sea is enough for our child-hearts!

So we fall into one of the two classes of tourists, either the triflers or the students. We either fight this demon Beauty, or lightly avoid its flaming breath. Yet not willingly do we ally ourselves with these typical Baedeker-Americans; we have our pang before we skip from town to town dreading our "objects of interest." For we have lost an illusion, as one usually must do when one takes that perilous voyage from the ideal to the concrete. How we pored over our photographs! How we invested them with thrills of joy as we imagined that wondrous time when the great, good thing should come to life before us!

And now to be struck chill! Not that the longed-for place or building is one whit less than we had fancied it, but that we ourselves are lacking in the power of enjoying it. Here is one of the tragedies of travel. We can fare now no longer on the wings of fancy—we are shut out from that fine, fair world; we must look our emotions in the face and say: "Wit, whither wilt?"

Something of this, whether more or less, we must feel with all the wonders of the world, all wonders made by men. At times, rarely and far apart, we encounter a more god-like simplicity, a beauty that is not dependent upon mathematical repetition or complex

ratios, nor upon incredible difficulty of execution and appreciation, but of a charm so perfect, that, like the circle, it seems to explain itself, while embodying unsolvable mystery. Beauty undraped is hard to find, but at times the mantle of wonder man has wrought falls from it, or grows transparent. Then art conceals art; we are rapt, and reason steals free, to leave us alone with a single emotion.

So near the Greeks came, that architects for all time shall seek from them the secret, that intricate and subtle law of proportion, that seems like a divine freedom instead. So near the Japanese have come, that art seems nature, and we can let our minds alone—and feel. Man learns the lesson of simplicity, and forgets it. Forgets it as a woman forgets, who, beautiful and full of grace, burdens our eyes with raiment and jewels. The balance of our emotions is delicate and sensitive—we can bear a definite amount of beauty, not a hair more.

Indeed, beauty itself can not bear the extra load, for in a trice it is transmuted into pathos, wonder, or to awfulness.

THE GENTLEMAN'S CODE

ACCUSTOMED as we are to regard women as more conventional and law-abiding than men, it may be thought impertinent and unscientific to assert of women that they, rather than men, are the social anarchists, and by their very lawlessness evidence the stronger character of the two sexes. We are told, for instance, that the male represents the radical, and the female the conservative, force in the human couple; that masculine energy is centrifugal and feminine centripetal; that man is forever experimenting, seeking the exceptional and the erratic, while woman prefers, discreetly, the bird in the hand, adheres to rule, and prefers the normal.

However this may be in the greater activities of life and in intellectual pursuits, men in many of their social relations and in their emotional experience often evidence a curious, a formal, allegiance to codified prejudice. In their manifestations of dress, of social honor, and even of the love instinct itself, men, far more than women, seem to conform to conventional

rules of deportment. They fear the authority of the public sentiment of their caste; they eschew originality. In many things, such as these, they are the slaves of custom.

The prescribed dress for men is fixed to definite limits of individuality to which no woman would submit. They are at the mercy of their tailors, their hosiers, and their bootmakers, whose models must be accurate to within a quarter of an inch of the regnant mode. Their choice in color is sharply defined, the number of buttons on their coats is provided for by a mathematical formula; their style and cut are fore-ordained, leaving no latitude for esthetic free-will. But a woman's fancy may fly free; she has the choice of the centuries—her evening gown may, with trivial adaptations, follow the lines of Empire, Restoration, Florentine extravagance, or Puritan sobriety. A woman of fashion is a general commanding an army of sartorial legions. To her councils of war she invites artists and dressmakers, tailors and milliners, but if she is successful the initiative must come from her. She must strike with originality and crafty finesse. On the subject of her raiment every normal woman is not only serious, but, as far as possible, inventive. To be dressed in style means only that she has a hundred

patterns to choose from, while a man has but four or five.

The gentleman's code of honor is as definite as the regulations of his dress. It is, in fact, so dominant that its power and influence often raise and keep a man to an ethical standard higher than that set by his own conscience. There are certain things a gentleman may not do; it is understood and accepted by all who claim that status. One does not, for instance, write anonymous letters, one does not use a lady's name in club gossip, one does not speak ill of an opponent or rival, one is always loyal to a confidence, after a quarrel as well as before. But many a man is obedient to these canons of etiquette, not through any masculine superiority of honor, but merely because of this recognized code.

Women, on the contrary, have no such specific, crystallized sentiment in this regard. To be a lady, indeed, implies a high-minded delicacy on such subjects, but when a woman breathes neither malice nor scandal, when she shows her sense of *noblesse oblige*, when she can quarrel without revealing secrets, it is because of the inherent nobility of her own character, and not on account of allegiance to any code. Most women have all other women as adversaries; most

men have all other men as their allies. Women know little of this *esprit de corps*, this mutual shielding of sex by sex, for the reason that they are not, ordinarily, so accustomed to law.

A man, in almost all his relations, is bound by regulations, and sustained by well-recognized rules of conduct with which he is thoroughly familiar. His business practise teaches him continually the necessity for discretion in talk, his club life affiliates him with a class to whom he owes specific loyalty and consideration, his political career constrains him with countless motives of policy and expediency. Thus his social ideals are communistic, while a woman, though she seem to bow to the yoke of society, is, at heart, and whenever practicable, an individualist. Emancipated as individuals, as a class women do not have the same social instinct—that idea of the greatest good of the greatest number—as do men.

But, though this reason may be accountable for most of the petty weaknesses, jealousies and inconsistencies of the gentler sex, does it not also point out the fact that woman, in all these relations, is the radical force, the experimenter, the iconoclast? A woman of honor is the more noble if she is living up to her own conception of duty than if she is conforming to placate public

opinion. And this is seen continually. Women rise to higher heights of sacrifice, and, when determined, they act with courage rare among men. They fling aside comment as chaff, when a man though he do nobly, has an eye to his spectators. A generous, magnanimous woman is more ingenuous and confident in well-doing than any man.

In her emotions, it might almost go without saying, women are even more bold. There is her field—she is never tired of discovery and exploration. It is, in fact, her world. We men do but touch at the shores of this vast empire and traffic with the treaty ports. Women take their lives in their hands and adventure far inland. With her heart for a compass and her emotions to propel her, her travels reach to worlds unkenneled by man.

The ordinary man in love is a sorry sight compared with his mistress. He makes his love conventionally, and continually disappoints the woman who wishes to see new lights gleam in his eyes. He is in poignant fear of discovery, he has a horror of ridicule, his one dread is lest he make a fool of himself. But a woman is a cheap chit indeed if she spends a thought on such nonsense. She is on a wild enterprise—what does it matter if the policeman catch a glimpse of a kiss stolen

too near a gas lamp? She has fancy that discards facts and dwells in the realm of pure idealism. She can shame a man's lesser passion by her ardor without trying; her abandon is superb.

So, do not smile if she insists upon attempting to enter a woman's club after she has been blackballed, if she whine a bit when she loses at cards, if she indulge in feline amenities with her fairer rivals. For she is herself in a thousand ways men never dare, and a fine woman is worth a hundred of the finest men.

After all, women are most like cats and men like dogs. One sex has never yet been civilized, and has moods of spontaneous impulse and untamed vigor of individuality. The other has come into social enlightenment, and, for individual liberty lost, has gained community welfare. As the cat lapses into savagery by night, and barbarously explores the dark, so primal and titanic is a woman with the love-madness. As the dog becomes thoroughbred in the laws of clan and caste—obedient, fraternal, loyal—so is a man who accepts the Gentleman's Code.

NONSENSE, LIMITED

TO-DAY I heard of an otherwise estimable woman who has just read a carefully prepared paper on "Mother Goose" nonsense rhymes. It seems to have been written with the primary adoption of an artificial point of view, and a secondary attempt to manufacture evidence to fit. Her thesis was the ethical and educational value of this nursery classic, with pedantic essays in determination of its history. Was ever an alleged scientific theory so preposterous?

"Ding dong bell, pussy's in the well," she quoted. "Don't we all know families where there is a little child that teases animals? 'Who put her in? Little Johnnie Green!' Ah, some such child will be moved by this portrayal of his cruelty, and hate to be called Johnnie Green! 'Who'll pull her out? Big Johnnie Stout!' And what child would not be proud to be called by that name?" And so on, through the old woman of Banbury Cross and "Little Jack Horner" to "Hey, diddle, diddle, the cat and the fiddle!" drawing her insufferable moral wherever she went. It sounds

like the prattle of some character out of Dickens, but it is true. To such base uses may even nonsense come!

Nonsense is, indeed, in need of a defender when it is attacked with the charge of sense. Let us deliver it from such friends as these! It is dreadful to think we may ever be asked why we enjoy nonsense, and have to prepare an answer; but, without taking the thing too seriously, we might, perhaps, reply to this amiable old fool thus:

Nonsense is nonsense—that is, it was until it became a modern cult, founded upon the scientific principles of the esthetic. Any attempt to legitimize it, or apologize for it, or seek to harness it to an utilitarian purpose by imputing to it sense, even in a small educational modicum (as my fatuous old ninny did), is beside the mark. You can not prove that tin is valuable because it is almost the same as feathers. To be sure, some nonsense has a grain of wit in it, but it is acknowledged by authorities that the less sense a verse has the more nonsense, and, consequently (as it is undiluted), the better. “The less there is of yours the more there is of mine,” said Alice, a saying which shows in theory and example about how much freight craft of this sort will bear.

But to defend nonsense on general principles would

be absurd. Some people, fortunately, have sense, and they like nonsense. Some people are nonsensical, and they prefer sense. But when it comes to a question of preventing little heads from bursting, we must stop and argue with such a garrulous old Mother Gooseberry, for, will you believe it? the paper was read before a class of kindergarten teachers. This bloodless and brainless, not to speak of humorless, lecturer, actually prescribed a drop of morality for every spoonful of nonsense given children.

Undoubtedly, nonsense is diametrically opposed to the Froebel method of education of the young, but, then, Froebel was a German. Yet, what if his way is good? It might almost go without saying that any antithesis to it would be good also. No extreme point of view is valuable unless it takes into account the opposite extreme. Indeed, the same mind leaps alternately in reaction from one to the other. The opposite immediately leaps up when any definite statement of generalities is made. If one is merely the negation of the other, each side becomes intensified by the contrast. So almost all impulses fly back and forth like a pendulum. In the conversation of the best talkers the spark flashes from grave to gay, from red to complementary green.

What has all this to do with nonsense? This—that even were nonsense really as barren a thing as solemn asses imagine, it would still be valuable as a rest from mental effort; it would be true recreation. But nonsense is not merely something from which the sense has been removed; it has an actual spirit and character of its own. When we close our eyes to rest them the darkness we see is not mere emptiness, it is a space that is filled with floating fancies, quaint forms, shifting, meaningless vagaries, unreasonable anarchistic visions. Nonsense—true nonsense—is like this. It has motion without direction, mass without weight, activity without energy. Who would not delight in dealing with such dream-stuff?

In the contrast between these two methods of play, the nonsense method, as opposed to Froebel's "development," we find again the distinction that is made between fancy and the imagination. Fancy creates, working along anarchistic lines, careless, free of the restraint of the rules of life; imagination constructs, weaving its web of human experience together into an organized pattern. No one doubts but that imagination is the higher form of intellectual activity, but no one can deny that fancy, too, has its place as a rejuvenating influence and a divine sport.

It is trite enough to say that what is ordinarily counted as useless is necessary. All loam and no sand will not make plants grow. But though it is agreed that all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy, the kindergartened Jack seldom gets a chance to play with his mind, however much he may have to play with his hands. "Development through play" describes well enough all that a German could comprehend, but "development through silliness" is often needed with these hyper-educated infants.

And, yet, nonsense is not silly, either! The vaudeville pedagogue who diagnosed Mother Goose was silly, if you like. Nonsense has a thrill. What it means, and why it affects us pleasantly, I doubt if any philosopher can adequately explain. Nor do we know just what we gain when we receive a shock of electricity. But the thrill is there just the same, and it seems to be beneficial. What we do know (and what philosophers say we do not know) is that suggestions do come from within as well as from without. Nonsense is, at best, nothing more or less than an enlivening, indescribable, perfectly useless, perfectly delightful suggestion. A little of this sauce might well be permitted to children, without putting in bitters.

The kindergarten method seems to enforce always a

purely subjective relation. The child is taught to see and touch—to be sensitive to a personal aspect of things. Romances permit him to lose himself for moments, to get outside this habit of touching, investigating, correlating himself with things, and steep himself in forgetfulness, while he enjoys blindly, objectively. And romance is but mild nonsense—any pedagogue will tell you that. Nonsense has no personal application or lesson; it has its own space, its own time.

Most of all, nonsense, in permitting us to enjoy objectively, educates children in the larger fields of humor. Any one who can get outside of himself and view things freely, unhampered by the personal limitation, can, perhaps, view himself and his own acts from the outside. This is the essence of humor—to be able to laugh at one's self as well as at others.

We need not fear, then, to allow the child to play with the prism. It seems only an empty, transparent thing, a useless thing; you can look right through it! And when the child allows the sunbeam to fall upon it, lo, the light is shattered into silly colors, absolutely unlike the warm ray of sunshine. But, after all, he may learn something from this pretty, pleasing, abnormal, nonsensical mass of incomprehensible hues!

FEMININE MODERNITY

THE question as to whether there is any essential difference, intellectually, between men and women remains always a fascinating subject for discussion, and is as yet not likely to be settled. The arguments on both sides, biological and sociological, are well known. One holds that women are functionally unable ever to be men's equals, although they may have an equivalent intelligence. They are intended by Nature to represent the conservative force of the human couple, and any great things in the way of esthetic creation must not be expected of them. The other side contends that the conditions which have surrounded women for so many generations have hampered their development, and that, as soon as the increasing opportunities for education and experience which we see in modern life shall have operated for a long enough period, woman's creative instinct shall be proved to be as broad and as subtle as man's.

Now, these two theories illustrate fairly well the *à priori* and the *à posteriori* method of philosophical reasoning. However we may speculate upon the ques-

tion, we should recognize the fact that the evidence is not all in, and this consideration alone lends weight to the dogma of the mental equality of the sexes. The earth, we are told, has been in a condition to sustain human life for only a few hundred thousand years, while it will probably continue to be adapted to man's existence for several millions of years more. The ratio is such that, to attempt to settle the question of woman's status at present, while she is only just growing out of her position as man's toy and chattel, seems absurd.

Still, the problem is alluring, and the more so nowadays, perhaps, on account of a curious phase of class consciousness (as the Socialists say) that some modern women have begun to show. The woman of to-day is apt to pride herself upon her femininity, to play with it, making of it a toy, which she shows off indulgently and whimsically to her friends, especially if they be men. Thus, for the first time, woman is illuminated by woman. She wears her sex, one might say, as if it were a garment a little out of date, pointing out, humorously, the comic anachronisms of its cut. Any one who has witnessed such an exposition will have noticed it as typical of women who are intellectually emancipated.

For instance, a woman may confess her vanity as an intrinsic but ridiculous trait that is most amusing. She looks at herself mentally as she looks at her physical self in the glass, and succeeds in receiving a purely objective sensation. If she shares it with you the revelation is most affording. Men have long since noticed how fond women are of repetition, of specific announcements and declarations in all matters that pertain to love; but to have a woman tell one that she wilfully misquotes in order to be corrected, that she consciously accuses, that her charge may be denied, that she simulates some moods in order to be wooed from them, brings one well within the portals of feminine psychology—a door no man may hope to pass unless it is unlocked for him.

Men have always known that women resisted, willing to be won, but it is only recently that women, having progressed to a man's conception of humor, have been willing to share the comedy of the situation with them. The ultra-modern woman plays the game of love with her cards laid on the table, and wins as handily as in the old days, when she was forced to use trickery and deception with the opposite sex. She makes no secret of her age, while confessing her dread

of growing old. She speaks of her love of dress and flattery as she speaks of her children, without embarrassment or excuse. In short, it would seem that the modern woman, a bit fearful of the day when she must exchange her privileges for rights, hoards the few remnants of distinct femininity, and rejoices the more in their possession the rarer they become. Even while acknowledging the weaknesses and inconsistencies which have gained her privileges, however, she attempts both to use them and despise them. She seems delighted to find that, despite her emancipation, the characteristics of the cave-woman and the medieval chattel of mere ornament still survive to baffle the logic of the male.

So, in such cases, it is as if each were two different women; one primitive, hypersexed, the natural, instinctive antagonist of the male, mysterious, inscrutable; the other sapient and discriminating, logical (or at least philosophic), her emotions, though potent, conscious to her, an actor rather than a puppet of temperament. They are like twins brought up in different countries and speaking different languages. One, the more highly developed, explains and translates the other's more primitive thoughts. She is the interlocu-

tor, and through her men know all they may of women. Nearer than this it is impossible for a man to penetrate.

Strange, this barrier and mystery of sex! Men long to scale it, yet would not have it down, and it is strangest and most elusive in these modern women through whose minds we catch glimpses of the primal creature beneath, like dim figures behind translucent glass. So tantalizing is the display of baffling vagary and elusive motives in the psychology of a clever woman that the male spectator speculates in vain. Do physically functional differences of sex predicate differing mental functions? Or have we been oversexed, creating for ourselves artificial differences which will not persist in the era of scientific thought? Time alone can answer the question, and there is time enough in which to collect evidence.

But at least our epoch has a fascination of its own, for now surely woman is in a transitional state, where the primitive instincts of sex merge into analytical states of mind, with the result that the woman of today has all the old charms and a multitude of newer graces.

THE GOLDEN MEAN

THE recrudescence of mysticism which has been so much in evidence for the last twenty years, and is, no doubt, the natural reaction from the purely scientific trend of thought of the nineteenth century, has attracted three different classes of believers. These might be roughly defined as the dogmatic, the drones, and the excitable. Pure idealism, which term may be stretched to include all these new doctrines, these pseudo-scientific Oriental creeds, has seldom derived its converts from those persons who hold the agnostic view, who seek the "golden mean."

To call any of these exotic theories new is as false as to classify them as mere superstitions. Palmistry, astrology, and that form of mental exorcism which is denominated "New Thought" seem, to any student of history, to be only revivals of the mistaken but sincere beliefs which obtained in the Middle Ages, when alchemy, astrology and necromancy were in popular credence. There seems to be this difference, however, that the medieval investigators and practitioners of

these arts were, according to their lights, actuated by a truly scientific spirit. They formulated and manipulated all the knowledge that was extant. The fact that alchemy paved the way to the knowledge of chemistry, and astrology to astronomy, is sufficient proof of this.

Because we have outgrown these hypotheses, and have grouped our experiences with the phenomena of nature according to new definitions (which, for want of a better term, we call laws), the modern scientific spirit considers the revival of medieval formula to be a reactionary movement. The higher forms of idealism embodied in Christian and mental science, in a similar way, though less gross in their objects, are, to the scientific collector of evidence, but relics of older philosophies, outworn, or at least discredited, by our increased knowledge of nature. New Thought can be resolved into the formula of psychology or common sense. The fundamental rule of modern scientific research is that no new law should be held accountable for phenomena until the laws known and formulated have been proven inefficient for explanation. Modern science takes for its standpoint the dogma that everything within our experience, being testified to only by the human senses, is explainable by a logical extension

of what we already know of science. This is the view of the materialist philosopher.

The idealist, on the other hand, denies the infallibility of science; he not only questions the materialistic interpretations of nature as so far inadequate, but he refuses to admit the jurisdiction of the scientific method. He adduces evidence to prove the limitation, if not the non-existence of so-called natural causes.

The first class to which such evidence naturally appeals is, by an apparent paradox, the materialist himself. The materialist is a dogmatist, and almost all dogma is the formulation of an extreme view. To assert that there is nothing but matter is one extreme, and that there is nothing but spirit, or mind, is the other extreme; and there is a natural tendency of the mind to fly to one extreme from the other.

"All's lend and borrow,
Joy demands sorrow;
Good, see, wants evil
Angel weds devil."

So Roman Catholics become atheists, and atheists Roman Catholics; so scientists embrace spiritualism. The proselyte becomes the greatest enthusiast, the reformed burglar or drunkard is notorious for his religious extravagance. Now, in the reports by the most

credulous followers of any new cult, stress is often laid upon the seemingly inconsistent character of the new convert. It is always the "hard-headed business man" who is most susceptible to the charlatany of the so-called mind-reader. It is the professed and stubborn materialist who is held up as the most remarkable brand from the burning, rescued by Christian Science. But such extremists are most amenable to reactionary or radical influence, after all.

The other two classes need little attention. One comprises the intellectually apathetic, the mental drones who are willing to let others do their thinking. Unable or unwilling to thrash out ethical or philosophical questions for themselves, they must rely upon authority and a well-defined code. Any simplification of the complexity of experience, any regulation of life to arbitrary rules, finds many converts. And such blind devotees are usually helped by coming under the yoke of intellectual submission.

While, however, this class is subject to mental inertia, another category comprises those who are intellectually in a state of unstable equilibrium. Every new creed, so it be either new or strange, attracts to itself a fringe of cranks and hysterical enthusiasts, who are willing to swallow any faith without either mastica-

tion or digestion. They would have magic—short cuts to success, without endeavor—or they would get rich quickly without working. Not only are new sects liable to danger of misinterpretation from such a thoughtless following, but every reform is, in a way, liable to ridicule and harm from the misguided zeal of excitable neophytes. They can not permanently injure a cause, but they may seriously hamper its proper and equable development. It is here that the person of the golden mean exercises his highest function, and judges dispassionately not the zealot, but the principle. It is a finely-poised mind that can recognize the divine law, “thou shalt not judge the doctrine by the priest.”

It is the person of the golden mean, then, who is the hardest to convert. It is the poet, who looks above and below things, who sees on both sides of the shield, who weighs all the evidence. And there are many such, who, being willing to admit that modern science is not perfectly adequate to explain the facts of life; who, recognizing that there may be more things on Heaven and earth than are dreamed of in modern philosophy, yet realize, too, that, in any concrete example of the alleged exercise of a supernatural law, the evidence is likely to be faulty or inaccurate. They are willing to believe that it may be possible for the spirits of the

dead to return, but, when confronted by a concrete case, they admit as well the possibility that the *revenant* was an hallucination, or an optical illusion. They may think that the mind exercises extraordinary powers over the bodily functions, but they can not forget, too, that any especial cure may have been effected by means of some forgotten or unknown physical cause. They may consider it probable that the lines on the palm of the hand, or the disposition of the moles upon the body, or the capillary markings upon the fingers, or the physiognomy, or the voice, or the gait of an individual—all may be correlated with that individual's character, and yet it is logical for them to deny that as yet any one has attained to the knowledge of these things necessary before they can be correctly interpreted. This is the person who is least apt to accept any extreme, idealistic or materialistic, and, until such persons have become convinced, no new cause can make much true progress; it is always in danger of burning itself out, or of being superseded by a later revelation.

But the person of the golden mean, too, may arrive at a mental "dead point," and be unable to progress, acted upon, as he is, by conflicting forces. He must make intellectual detours of investigation, keeping a

sane spirit ready to correct any eccentricity. He does not make the world move much faster, but, like the ratchet on the wheel, he conserves what has been gained by the human intellect. There comes a time when one new point is proved to his conviction. The wheel of knowledge then moves up another notch, and the ratchet falls into the new place, never to recede.

MAXIMS AND SAWS

A SAW cuts but in one direction. So does the maxim or adage. It is a half-truth that, to become truly pregnant, needs to be wedded to its complementary statement. And, like a happy married pair, each is so wise, so true, so beautiful, that we can scarcely tell which is the better half.

Maxims are like lawyers who must needs see but one side of a case. They disregard half the evidence, and formulate their prosecution or defense in a single crisp sentence. "She who hesitates is lost," says one. "Look before you leap," says the other. I need but to give a list of contradictory saws to prove my point. Let me present them, paired, to show how difficult it is to derive wisdom from knowledge:

"A man is known by the company he keeps."

"Appearances are deceitful."

"Honesty is the best policy."

"The truth is not to be spoken at all times."

"Too many cooks spoil the broth."

"In a multitude of counselors there is wisdom." Or,
"Two heads are better than one."

“Out of sight, out of mind.”

“Absence makes the heart grow fonder.”

“Take care of the pence, and the pounds will take care of themselves.”

“Penny wise and pound foolish.”

“A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.”

“Nothing venture, nothing have.”

“A rolling stone gathers no moss.”

“A setting hen never grows fat.”

“Strike while the iron is hot.”

“A patient waiter is no loser.”

“The early bird catches the worm.”

“There are as good fish in the sea as ever were caught.”

“It never rains but it pours.”

“Every cloud has a silver lining.”

“When poverty comes in at the door, love flies out at the keyhole.”

“Money is the root of all evil.”

“One swallow does not make a summer.”

“Straws show which way the wind blows.”

“ ’Tis a long lane that has no turning.” Or, “ ’Tis never too late to mend.”

“As the twig is bent, the tree’s inclined.”

“Poverty makes strange bedfellows.”

“Birds of a feather flock together.”

“The gods give nuts to those that have no teeth.”

“God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb.”

“Familiarity breeds contempt.”

“Every crow thinks her chick the blackest.”

So it is that truth is too elusive, too elastic to be compressed into a single sentence. To sail directly to windward we must beat back and forth from one approximation to another.

The conception of truth as definite and therefore definable is misleading. Truth is an abstraction, a hypothesis, as impossible to conceive as is the mathematical hypothesis of infinity. The nearest approach we can make to infinity is by means of series, increasing regularly. But infinity, according to geometry, is itself divisible into different orders of greatness. The infinite area inside the parabola is less than the infinite area outside the same curve. Nevertheless, the formula of the parabola is a means of describing its shape, though its direct statement is false.

Yet maxims have their place, for they are little sermons. We must have our blocks from which to build our little houses, we must have our precepts from which to construct philosophies. Some of the rough facts of life must be compressed into adages in order to conserve for youth the experience of mankind. Children must have empirical rules, but they must learn the exceptions themselves, and it is not until they have done so that they find the futility of attempting to formulate life and conduct into any definite code. We teach them the primary colors, but they must find their own purple in the landscape, and think of it, too, as purple, rather than as a combination of blue and red.

The essay is another amplification of the adage, and it can scarcely do more than suggest. When it attempts to assert, the opposite statement springs up and challenges our attention, as red, too long stared at, induces the sensation of green. The function of the essay is rather to stimulate thought, to induce a new point of view; and, whether it converts us to this fresh way of looking at things, or confirms us in our old opinion, is little matter, if so be it has made us think. It should be connotative rather than denotative to inspire our imaginations.

Maxims pave the way for thought, and on them we go faster and farther, though we go only on the beaten track. Without bigots, eccentrics, cranks and heretics the world would not progress, for they, possessed of but one side of a truth, flourish their saws as weapons and hew a way for us. Through affirmation and denial we make a zigzag course toward reform.

Push on one pedal of your bicycle and the other comes up to your foot ready for its impulse. So, alternating, we go forward, with never a stroke cleanly driven in the true direction we wish to take. Maxim and counter-maxim, theory and converse, proposition and corollary, rule and exception, orthodoxy and heterodoxy, appeal in turn, and each opposite, paired, does not make zero, like positive and negative terms, but a mechanical couple insuring rotation. Both are true, both are false.

But we do progress. We are like points on the rim of a wheel, thinking that while we are rising and falling to maxim and contradictory adage, we are merely revolving in futile rotation. Instead, we are all carried forward in a secret curve of beauty, the beautiful arch of the cycloid.

X IS GREATER THAN Y

IN the algebra of the emotions we are constantly given problems containing two unknown quantities of pleasure. Upon the solution of such puzzles our happiness depends, for, confronted by two different courses of action, we have to decide which alternative to accept. One, we may say, holds X units of pleasure; the other, Y units. The equation is likely to be an affected quadratic, hard to solve. The nearest we can come to it, usually, is a conviction of the fact that X is greater than Y.

Were there any such thing as a true unit of pleasure our problem would be easier. A unit, however, must be a constant, an invariable, in order that its multiples may be employed to describe varying degrees of enjoyment. Should a philosopher undertake to discover one, he might perhaps reason thus:

Let us first experiment with what might be called the juvenile unit, and assume it to be, for instance, the amount of pleasure derived from eating one pound of sweets. A child, therefore, might possibly be logical and accurate enough to state that, in the act of going

fishing, there are four units of pleasure, or an amount equal to that in eating four pounds of sweets. But after one has eaten one pound of sweets, the second pound is not so pleasurable, and the third still less so. Our unit evidently decreases in value as it is multiplied. It is, therefore, not a constant, and will not do for mathematical precision.

Let us now try the lover's unit—one kiss from the lips of a sweetheart. But here we find the value of our unit increases with multiplication, for the more a lover (if he be a true lover) kisses his sweetheart, the more he wishes to, and the last kiss is always the best. This unit, therefore, is not a constant quantity.

Next let us try the artistic unit—the pleasure in seeing a certain picture or in hearing a certain song. But some pictures and some songs are more enjoyable the oftener they are enjoyed, while some grow less enjoyable the oftener they are enjoyed. This unit, therefore, is also variable, and can not be substituted in any equation of joy.

Our philosopher would at last come to the conclusion that there could be no such unit adopted, unless, indeed, it be the sensation of death, which is probably the same for all, and varies little from time and place. But even if death, as a unit of pleasure, is not a minus

quantity, it is probably an infinite quantity, and hence can not, according to mathematical principles, be used at all as a standard.

Let us call X and Y, then, different quantities of pleasure—definite (though unknown) multiples of a variable unit. The unit varies according to the circumstances of the particular case, as fatigue and appetite vary, or as age and taste. We can only estimate the values of X and Y, then, from our knowledge of our own characters. To illustrate:

Suppose you are climbing a mountain, and, while still a little way from the top, find that you have not time to reach the summit and return for dinner; or suppose merely that you are too fatigued to go farther with pleasure. The satisfaction in attaining your goal might give you Y units of pleasure. The comfort in a return to dinner and bed would give you X units. Shall you go or return? A fatuous pride of victory, the conventional feeling that a thing once begun must be ended, forces you on, while common sense urges you back. You decide that, as the climb was undertaken solely for pleasure, you will get most pleasure by abandoning your project. In other words, though you fail to solve the problem accurately, you become convinced that X is greater than Y.

This is a type of many problems—physical, emotional, mental, ethical—which we have to consider in our conduct. Each depends on a calm consideration of the circumstances; in a word, it is only a question of common sense.

But is not common sense a fit subject for analysis? Common sense is a mysterious kind of logic, but it has its principles. When one stops to examine it, it shows itself to be as complex as the microscopic organism which seems to the naked eye so small and simple. Of all its elements none is so often neglected as the recognition of the fact that X is greater than Y.

I buy an automobile, but, because I have a fascinating neighbor, my machine proves to be a bore. I dislike to spend the time necessary to make it ready, or to attend to its repairs. I prefer to call on my neighbor than to ride out alone. I had expected to use it a great deal; it cost much money. Shall I permit my financial conscience to harry me into using it, in order to get the value of my investment? Must I take the Y units of pleasure I expected of it? No; for my fascinating neighbor can give me X units in a single call! And X is greater than Y.

The problem of the artist is more abstruse. He can never point to the exact moment or amount of

pleasure he receives. He could not say whether it lies most in the inspiration of conception, the feverish travail of production, or the rapture of completion. He knows only that in some strange way his work seems play and his pain becomes pleasure. Yet idleness and comfort and diversion all seem pleasant, too—as pleasant as Y. But the stern labor of achievement is joyful, as joyful as X. Though he knows not the reason, he is wise enough to know that X is greater than Y.

As with the physical delights of all athletic sports, so it is with the mental struggles of the arts and sciences. And so, too, on a higher plane, with moral questions of renunciation and sacrifice. The old conflict between love and duty, between riches and honor, between the individual and society, are all questions of the relative values of X and Y, X representing the nobler joys of unselfishness, the altruistic reward, while Y stands for personal gratification or happiness. It is only because one does not properly appreciate these values that one chooses the lesser; but few stop long enough over the problem to decide that X is greater than Y.

The conventional society woman, wearying herself with unnecessary formal duties and occupations, and

all the routine of boredom, is a type of the many who do not see that X is greater than Y. Such have made a fetish of pleasure, and the demon rules them with a preposterous code. Mentally blind, they follow the letter of his law, accepting as pleasant things irksome and annoying. Plays, poems, pictures, music, which make no esthetic appeal to them, they take like counterfeit money, preferring a bad half-crown to a good sixpence. It takes courage for even an educated person to be independent and affirm with boldness, "X is greater than Y."

It is a test of maturity, as well as of common sense, to solve such equations rationally, and to decide calmly, upon the Relative Importance of Things, without coercion by the empirical standards of enjoyment. We can not all agree, of course, but we may at least decide for ourselves. And we need not think, foolishly, that because X was greater than Y in another instance, or a year ago, it can not be true now that Y is greater than X!

WOMEN'S FASHIONS

NOTHING is supposedly so foreign to men's interest as the fashions in women's clothes. Here he is considered the barbarian, an outsider, wholly incompetent and devoid of any appreciative power. As to knowledge, his statements, when he does pretend to any intimate information on the mode, is laughed to scorn. He is supposed to know only the one term, "cut bias," and his malaprop remarks are classic.

But, at the risk of appearing effeminate, I must confess that the subject appeals to my curiosity. I am in the same anomalous position as a woman who affects an interest and intelligence in machinery. Women's fashions, the most whimsical, fantastic, absurd and illogical of subjects as it is, has kept me awake nights. I have no personal interest in the business, however; my position is that of the unprejudiced observer. I even take women's fashions without wonder, knowing how vain is any attempt to treat the matter philosophically.

With all the fun women make of us, they scarcely

realize how dense is the ordinary man's ignorance of a subject that is, to a whole sex, a matter of vital importance. The Mode is, for most men, a sealed book—and one, too, that he has no desire to open. The very technique of it baffles him, and of the primary principles upon which a woman's gown is constructed he has no idea. A woman's costume to him consists of a skirt, and a waist, with sleeves—perhaps a belt. There his terminology ceases. Of the subdivisions of yokes, panels, gores, ruffles, tabs, stoles, and revers he knows naught. Nor can he name the principal families of garments, his education stopping at the differentiation between a cloak, cape and jacket. What of boleros, Louis Quinze and three-quarter coats, coffee coats, Eton jackets, and a hundred other kinds of “wraps”?—nothing.

That fashions change he knows, but how and when he is not aware, unless some female friend insists upon opening his eyes. He has seen big sleeves go out and smaller ones come in, but can he tell last year's cut from this? Can he tell a bishop's sleeve from a leg-of-mutton? Can he tell, without looking, where it should be baggy and where tight, and how the cuff goes, and whether rows of tucks are proper, and all about the lining? No, of course not. Nor how many

gores are in the *mondaine's* skirt, nor whether a crushed girdle should be worn or a leather belt.

Nor, to be candid, can I. My chief claim to wisdom is this—that I realize that here is a science the intricacies of which few men suspect exist. Men think of women as puttering and fussing over their clothes, no doubt inventing them, out of hand; but all this magic lore, the intelligent digestion of which only professional dressmakers are capable, is a world beyond man's ken.

But they are not merely playing a superior game of dolls, these women; I am sure of that, now. I have dipped into fashion literature, and come out frozen with terror. At first I thought I might glance over some fashion journal, and get, in ten minutes or so, an intelligent comprehension of the winter styles, so that when I walked abroad I might easily pick out the smart from the merely well dressed, and the slipshod from the behind-the-times. Only women, who have made a life-long study of such things, can imagine what a surprise I received.

In the first place, I could, by no power of common sense, identify in the pictures the particular gown I had just read described. I had to go by the number of the costume, and then, with one finger on the words

and one on the fashion plate, make out, part by part, each item of the garment. Finally, for permanent edification, I wrote across the figure the scientific names of each part, as "waved insertion" and "inverted box plait," and so on, having considerable trouble in deciding just where the "postilion" was. These preliminaries alone took me several hours.

But then, when, with my lesson learned, as I thought, I went on the street, how lamentably meager seemed my information! Where was the "stole with tabs"? Where was the Greenland seal jacket? Where, oh, where was that distinctive "1830 effect" at which I had rejoiced? I had learned that the mode compelled "a circular shaping with darts, affording a smooth adjustment over the hips." Were all the women I met frumps, or was I an idiot, without understanding of the English language, or as one who, having eyes, sees not?

Hats I frankly gave up immediately. How to tell one that is stylish from one that is *passé*, except as to color, for colors do, even to men, seem to have their seasons, I could not understand. A man's theory is that a woman ought to wear only what is becoming, but I now realize how crude are such vague general principles. But still, even in the fashion magazines

of the month current, hats evidence a wide range of choice that seems to me to be inclusive of everything a milliner could devise. And, *à propos*, is "picture hat" a general or specific term? I could not determine from my authority, who seemed to take a knowledge of such elementary matters for granted. Is there no primer for men who would acquire the rudiments of this great science?

But I could, at least, intelligently admire the fashion writer's diction and rhetoric. Fashion literature has developed, even in my time of observation, to almost the point of being an art by itself. I culled many quaint and picturesque phrases, some so fascinatingly alluring as almost to make one's mouth water for a sight of the creation. "Pervaded with tiny dots" charmed me. "A pink violet shade shot with gray" was visualistic. But here is my gem—"tuck shirrings in the sleeves accentuate the drooping shoulder appearance, and the voluminous puffs sag modishly over two-seam linings having simulated cuffs of lace." The description would be voluptuous were it not so spirited! What man could read this fancy calmly?—"a development of Burgundy red French flannel trimmed with gold Soutache braid over silk, and brass bullet buttons arranged in groups."

Equally bewildering to a man are the thousands of fabrics from which a woman has to choose. One gasps at the diversity, which no dictionary will explain. What, in Heaven's name, is zibeline, or zenana, Louisine, vicuna, or voile? Lady's cloth seems easily understood, though experience makes me wary of defining its texture; but Corean crêpe, *peau de cygne*, Paraguay lace, and Pekin tussore silk, even taffeta and kersey, are mere words to me. But they sound beautiful, and I am sure they are. As for "pink crêpe Albatross, with Maltese lace," it is certainly convincing, even as a phrase, without being made up.

In searching for the prevailing color, too, I wandered wide afield, through blossoming meadows. Almost every flower was represented before I had read the fashions through. "A wonderful range of violet, fuchsia and dahlia shades" are found in velvets, and in blue, a "shade of blue that suggested the hyacinth." To these, heliotrope, begonia, and geranium, and jonquil, on through Flora's realm. Here was a "rich plum color being particularly in evidence," and there "a delicate peach hue" was seen, and apricot and apple and banana yellow, too. But what hue is biscuit? Gun-metal and ciel-blue, I know, but "opal and moonlight colorings" puzzle me,

Well, after all, we men have much to learn. But somehow, so long as the right girl has what seems to be the right gown, we do not much care. I have picked my own favorite from this mass of costumes, though, and when she comes down to the drawing-room I am fondly hoping that she will wear a "one-color harmony, with beautiful long, lobe-shaped spangles on cream net." I shall never forgive her if she dares try a "one-seam sleeve in flowing style, with a circular cuff!" It sounds coarse.

PERSONALITY

“**H**OW d’you do, Mr. Smith! You don’t remember me, *do* you?” Who has not been struck dumb by such a question and writhed at the public humiliation? Who has not groped in vain for some tactful way by which to extricate himself from the situation? Of all the terrors of the drawing-room the person who inflicts this question upon you without giving you a clue to his name is the pest paramount. Tactlessness, conceit and rudeness can go no further. You can, perhaps, escape the bore and the cad, but this affable torturer is always with us. He comes when least expected; no provision can enable you to escape in time. Unless you are a King, with a Chamberlain at your elbow to prompt you, you must face the music and pass off the inquisition as lightly as possible.

“How d’you do, Mr. Smith! You don’t remember me, *do* you?”

What answer can one make?

I know of but three sorts of reply—the counter-check quarrelsome, the lie circumstantial and the re-

tort courteous. The choice of these Touchstonian replies depends upon the degree of anger into which you have been lashed. If you are slow at recalling faces or names, and if you have borne the sting of such inept remarks recently, you may say, using the countercheck quarrelsome:

“No, why should I?”

Is this not justifiable? Why, indeed, should we care to know a person who can be willing so to embarrass you? I, for one, do not. What conceit for him to think that I needs must recall his face and his bland affability! For, as a rule, the person who makes use of this remark is a mediocrity; no one with brains would expect that, among a thousand persons, I would remember him, and no one with an ounce of breeding would put me to the test.

The preface of his name alters the whole case, for if he says: “I am Mr. Jones; I suppose you do not remember me?” with what ardor he would be welcomed and clasped by the hand! With what haste one would assure him that he had been often in one’s mind! That single instant of preparation is enough to give us a chance to recover. On the second we have placed him in our picture gallery. But it is a rogue’s gallery after all, for what he really has said is:

“How d’you do, Mr. Smith! You don’t remember me, *do you?*”

But perhaps you are soft-hearted; you do not wish to return rudeness for rudeness. You prefer to use your wit to break your fall; you think you may gain time by a jest. You may, at least, hope to disconcert your inquisitor. And so, maybe, if you bear some faraway resemblance to a famous actor, author, tinker, tailor or thief, you reply, facetiously:

“I beg your pardon, but haven’t you made a mistake? I am not Mr. Smith—I am Francis Wilson.”

This is the lie circumstantial. I recommend it to all sufferers. It will baffle for a moment the most determined attack of misguided friendship. You put the burden of proof upon your opponent, and it will go hard if you do not draw a smile from him, under cover of which you can reform, reinforce your presence of mind, and sustain a second attack. Said smilingly, it disarms your adversary, or placates him, at least, for your lack of recognition: spoken seriously, it may actually force him to retreat, and you can kill him with a taunt at your leisure.

The lie circumstantial may be varied in several ways, according to how much you care to regard policy or consequences.

But you may have the mildness of the dove, and be possessed with the fatal desire to please. You may be a clergyman, to whom such violent parries are forbidden. You may be a King (without a Chamberlain near by), when delicacy and moderation are necessary for reasons of State. For such as you, the retort courteous in one of its many forms. You may content yourself with the glib and banal remark, in tentative interrogation:

“Really, you know, one meets so *many* people!”

You may let frankness suffice, and boldly, but kindly, acknowledge your slip of memory, saying:

“I’m sorry, but I’m afraid I don’t recall you just this minute!” or, “I’m afraid you have the advantage of me!”

But such concessions involve an immediate and enthusiastic, if not a hysterical, expression of pleasure as soon as the fiend’s name is finally divulged—a sop to vanity that should be beneath one’s manhood to grant. We do not, in point of fact, feel much spontaneous pleasure at meeting a character so odiously introduced—one who has already used the needle upon us in petty torture. Perhaps the only other reply is something like this—for it is true, it is kind, and it is necessary:

“My dear sir, if I do not immediately recognize your face, it is because I am face-blind—an infliction which I sincerely regret. Of the thousand persons I have met this week, I suppose I could give names to but a bare thirty. And most of these either wear goggles, are deformed, or excessively ugly, or bark like a dog when I meet them. But you, the real inside You, I shall recall perfectly, so soon as you remind me of your name, and where I happened to see you last; for, though I can not always recall names or faces myself, I usually recall the individuals who bear them.”

So I offer this discussion of a notorious social disease for what it is worth, and you may select your own remedy. But here, as much as anywhere else in the way of social abuse, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, and it is my hope that my plaint may fall under the notice of some of the pestilential bores who are themselves guilty of this insufferable remark, so that they may never again say, suavely, inconsiderately, cruelly:

“How d’you do, Mr. Smith! You don’t remember me, *do you?*”

ABSENCE

THE attempt to determine the rationale of absence, to seek in it its philosophic meaning and results, is not often made by parted friends. Though it is looked on, usually, as an unmitigated misfortune, it has not that finality which enforces a comprehending resignation. Confronted by the great prostrating fact of death, we seek, through religion, science or quackery, some solution of the mystery, some guide to hope. The sickened heart seeks succor; it must wring consolation from the fatality. But the analogous phenomenon of sleep arouses no such investigation. We are so accustomed to this minor form of death that, though it is as mysterious as permanent dissolution, we give it little thought.

It is so with absence. We regard life's partings with friends as inevitable; we fall into temporary forgetfulness, trusting to awaken into the same old comradeship on the morrow; but we do not look for the compensatory good.

But we do at least understand the rationale of sleep

as a recuperative agency, a necessary corollary to the work of the day. So absence may be regarded as a let-up from the pleasant endeavor of intimacy.

With the best of friends we must give and take little annoyances, wounds too slight to complain of, yet which require time for healing. The newly married husband and wife will learn to adjust themselves to a normal amount of friction, and become calloused at the exposed spots where vanity or pride is soonest hurt. But this very callousness induces a loss of sensitiveness which changes love into mere friendship. We have but to look about us to see this common effect of such close intimacy. It is the way of the world, the pathetic secret most women lock in their hearts. The little bruises have no time thoroughly to heal, and in consequence the emotional fiber is toughened and grows less and less responsive.

To correct all this is, perhaps, the proper function of absence. No matter how near and dear is our friend, a meeting after parting makes him more welcome. The statement of this fact would be a platitude were it not contrasted with the happy relations of couples who have not known separation. The Brownings, who were not parted for a day after their wedding, for instance, still stand as types of one of the

highest orders of human affection. But we must regard such harmoniously mated persons as exceptional examples of ideal love. There are few enough not to affect the general rule that familiarity breeds contempt.

The importance of the analysis of absence, however, lies in the fact of its explanation of why such exquisitely adjusted and perfectly mated couples are so few. May it not be because the intercourse is not often broken? To prove that, however, we should find that the sailor, returning after his voyage, is always the happiest husband of the happiest wife. Not at all; for, if we draw the analogy between temporary absences and sleep, this condition of protracted wandering would be most like the case of an invalid, who is incapacitated for long intervals of time. There is a definite period of emotional rest which is beneficial, but a longer abstinence from companionship creates a spiritual loss; we can see so many other persons, do so many things, pass through so many crises, that we become spiritually foreign or estranged. We may change so much in ideals or in point of view that we can not meet on the same terms one who has heretofore been in closest sympathy with us.

This is one extreme, the disintegrating effect of

different environments ; the other is the too close growing together of a pair who always share the same daily mental food. We have pathetic examples of that, too, in old couples, who have become so dependent one upon another that when one is taken away the other can not live alone. Touching as these cases are, closely as they conform to the ancient ideals of marriage, the two having become marvelously one, it is not our best modern conception of affinity, nor of mental development. We have learned to respect individuality. Not only is the wife no longer the chattel and slave of her husband, subject to his whim, molded to his theories of life, dutiful, servient, but her contribution to marital happiness has become a necessary and positive inspiration of character and temperament. The husband and wife of to-day are wedded sovereigns, each reigning over independent but allied kingdoms. She has her life where she is queen, he has his where he is king, and the two, like Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, in amity or in love, bring one to the other, strange gifts of great price.

But the highest development of personality is not possible where the harness of the span is fastened too closely. Molded by the same environment, witnessing the same scenes, the two can give each other little that

is new. It is where husband and wife work side by side in factory or mine that the most squalid and mentally death-like conditions are found. It is the man of leisure who sees too much of his wife who most often grows to tire of her. The business man, who is continually refreshed by contact with his world, and whose wife, in his absence, makes the most of hers, have, when the lamp is lighted at the end of the day, something to exchange. This daily parting is for them a spiritual or emotional sleep, and brings a regular restorative effect to their union.

This consideration gives us at least a point of view, a way of looking at absence as, in its secret way, a blessing, and if it do no more than temper the pain of parting that is so much gained. If I must go forth to war I shall come back a soldier; shall not that revelation of me delight you? I can not speak to a stranger, but I am subtly changed by him; I grasp new ideas, I know so much more of the world. Shall not that help and please you when I bring it back to our fireside? Shall we not talk it over and apply it to ourselves? I go out for a day seeking butterflies, and you, who share my love of entomology, look over my prizes when I return, rejoicing in the new additions to our collection. Shall you not rejoice as well

over every fact of life that I bring after this sad absence is over? Shall you not also fight your battles and win your victories, and grow in spiritual wealth and beauty? Why should we seek to bind each other and travel a three-legged race always side by side?

And when I return your little word that made me frown shall be forgotten. I shall have had time to see how true it was or from what motive it sprang. You, too, will have forgiven some of my carelessness and thoughtlessness; you will have had time to consider the fact that my faults and virtues spring from the same root—that I could not have quick, affectionate impulses without displaying a quick temper also. What we know of one another shall have been digested, and we shall have had time for another meal, a further reach into the great unexplored realm of individuality, where we shall wander forever, seeking new delights.

Ouida's heroine in *Othmar* spun this web of fancy much too fine. She was afraid to marry, lest a perfect lover become a commonplace husband. After she wed she studiously kept him away, lest she should grow to know him too well. There's artificial sleep, if you like. I shall, I hope, trust my wife too well to resort to any such spiritual narcotic!

THE KEEPSAKE

THERE is a major and a minor quality to every good gift, qualities that may well be termed altruistic and egoistic elements. We give from two motives: first, to confer happiness by the possession of an object; and second, to be remembered by that gift. We may have one reason or the other, or both, for giving; but it is the keepsake quality in presents that the lover or the friend has most need to study if he would play the game aright.

There are gifts enough that are purely altruistic, the gifts of unselfish love, from our mother's first milk to the last friendly offices of the grave. Such gifts need little art, for the want speaks loudly and must be heard. We give, indeed, in such cases, only what we owe to friendship, as we give food to the hungry or clothes to the naked. We can not satisfy every want, but what we do give is a symbol of our willingness to give all. Through our so doing the presentation becomes not so much an event as a part of the

necessary course of friendship. The father's allowance, the uncle's jackknife, and such Christmas presents as come only because the time calls for the ceremony, forge no new links in the chain of relationship. They are debts due us upon the mutual account of love. And so we, in the giving, expect nothing more than that the recipient should be pleased,—the "oh!" and the "ah!" are all our payment.

As in the old rhyme :

"When the Christmas morning came,
Both the children bounced from bed—
'Whe-ew! Whe-ew!'
That was all the children said!"

and forthwith, the present, which had never been a part of us, becomes a part of our friend. We are not attempting, in satisfying such desires, to confer upon ourselves a vicarious immortality.

But the lover or the friend has other requirements to fulfil. He desires to present a true keepsake, a permanent and live thing, not a dead one, an instrument whose mainspring is memory, that, like a clock, shall ring out his hour with musical chimes of recollection whenever its time comes. It may be called egoistic to wish this, but it is not necessarily selfish,

for what better gift can he give than a part of himself? What, then, can he find to give that will serve him loyally during his absence? He is paying no debt, now, remember; he has to do with rites, not rights,—not with demands, but delights. He is planting a seed whose flower shall be remembrance.

First, then, a true keepsake must come as a surprise, not as the answer to a long-felt desire. For, with an object too much wished for, associated thoughts cluster so closely that the memory of the giver has no place to stick. One has wanted it for so long that, its possession obtained, what one will think of is of that old, envious desire, and not of how it was satisfied. One must necessarily unconsciously recall one's first vivid admiration or one's need, and then, perhaps, consciously and shamefully, the donor to whom one owes the gift. And so the giver loses in this psychological competition. The gift has still its intrinsic worth, but none of that extrinsic charm with which, as a true keepsake, it should be gilded.

So you may buy that particular piece of blue Canton she likes and has admired if you will: but if you do, you sacrifice your memory upon the altar of friendship. What will she remember first and best? Only that particular shelf in the cupboard of the curiosity

shop where it used to sit, and the old silver teapot that stood beside it! She will have in her nostrils, as she handles it, now, not the perfume of your friendship, but the dusty, moldy odor of antiques. She will not see it illumined by the color of your love, so much as by that vagrant shaft of sunshine that came through the window to play upon the old mirror. It is not her fault, but yours. She is at the mercy of the subconscious self. Oh, you have done well to please her! It was kind and generous,—but, in love's service, that is not enough. You might have given her a keepsake; you have but made a present. She will try,—oh, how she will try!—to be grateful every time she looks at it; but you could have made it so easy that it would have required no conscious attempt of her will.

So memory plays queer pranks with us. She never brings back the important, crucial event first; she loves better the minor episodes of life, and especially the little trivial, meaningless accidents, details and curiosities of the commonplace. We forget how Caruso sang, but we remember how a cat walked absurdly across the stage. May we not, therefore, take advantage of the quirks of such unreasoning recollections, and twist them to our own ends?

For see! The opposite method, the reversal of the picture, shows how easily we may play upon the familiar and the wonted thought, how we may appeal to the subconscious. You have but to reach to the plate-shelf of your own dining-room and hand down the piece of blue Canton and give it her, when, marvelously, you have given not it, but yourself, into her keeping! There's a gift that will last, a constant, delightful memory of you forever. Why, it is fairly soaked in you, and all her envy can but make it the more highly prized. Have her eyes turned lingeringly upon its beauty? You have turned that longing into satisfied pleasure when she thinks how she has used it at your board so many, many times. There's a color that will never wear off. There's a memory that will not crack or chip. There's the true psychology of the keepsake. It has become as much a part of you, in her thought, as a lock of your hair. Of all gifts, those that have been owned and loved by the giver are the true memorabilia, and most to be prized, most to be swayed by and sweetly spelled.

There's much difference, too, in the giving of gifts, between the satisfying of a want and the gratification of a wish. To surprise your friend with the answering of a need that was unconscious is a victory that

insures remembrance. There was a man who slept for a year on a bed without realizing that it was hard and full of lumps. A friend slept with him, once, and complained of the discomfort; the owner never lay in the bed again without misery. There was a case for a gift that would have endured. Had the friend but replaced the old mattress by a new one, he would have been remembered every night. So it is with less humorous cases. The keepsake is meant usually not to feed an old hunger, but to help one to acquire a new taste. What your friend wishes he has so coated with desire that he will never remember you who gave it unless you present him with your own possession. What he wants he may not know that he wants, or, in other words, he may not yet desire. You must study him with a friendly eye, you must scientifically examine his temperament, his taste, his moods; and it will go hard if, whether by paraphrasing an expressed desire, or by taking the hint from some unconscious admiration, you do not find the loadstone that shall attract his magnet. Put not your faith in a mere whim,—for of nothing does one grow so tired and resentful as of the passed fancy—but try him again and again till the test is sure.

Gifts of one's own handiwork are, of course, true

keepsakes. But the object must be a desirable one, it must have some place in the economy of your life, and not be a mere superfluity, or else it gathers pity rather than remembrance. The most delicate and exquisite present, though it expresses the loving care of your friend, does not fulfil its purpose as a remembrancer, unless it ministers to some need other than an esthetic one; and the poorest, crudest bit of handwork, if it is usable, will be lovingly preserved,—use will gild its worth and color its homely tones. The thing that is a mere object of art is, so far as its keepsake value is concerned, a dead thing, and it gathers the rust and dust of forgetfulness. It is only itself.

The true gift must not be too trivial, if it is to minister to a permanent emotion. If it is too poor, it loses itself in the background of one's daily life, it becomes, again, merely property, it becomes a part of the recipient rather than of the giver. A trifle, if it has no previous associations, can hold sentiment, but not for long. The case is fragile, and a mood can break it. The dead rose may be treasured for a while; but put another beside it, and its perfume of memory and sentiment soon dies. No; if a memory is to be enshrined, the reliquary must itself be beautiful and worthy. It must be a thing apart from common things,

it must testify to its sacred contents. The jewel of friendship should be set in a ring of pure gold. The thimble she used to wear, the knife he always kept in his pocket,—these are of a different category, like the blue Canton piece that stood upon the sideboard; but, though you pick a pebble from the shore upon the very day of days, you can not make a gem of it, and it will lose luster and fade.

So, though you can not arbitrarily assign an extrinsic interest by the mere mandate of the will, there are still ways of tricking the memory. There is craft in the manner of giving, of which a true psychologist can avail himself. To give impulsively, dramatically, picturesquely, often insures remembrance of the presentation by the same appeal to the subconscious reflexes of thought. Tear the chain from your neck in a mood of magnanimity and give it with a divine impulse, and you thread it with jewels brighter than the stars. Hide the ring under her pillow so that she shall find it, when, languid and susceptible, she prepares for dreams, and you give her a living poem she can not forget.

Does all this seem cold-blooded and premeditated? Perhaps; and yet so are memories coerced,—so are

the links riveted upon the lovely fetters of friendship. We give more than the gift when we give a piece of throbbing life. We give an event, not an episode; we give an immortal excitement. And indeed, such gifts are themselves keepsakes, though we attach to them no concrete object for a symbol. He who makes things happen is never forgotten, and she who punctuates life with memorable emotions lives for aye.

Consciously or unconsciously done, these are the ways in which nature herself is tricked, for we do but play her own game. All's fair in love. The thing can be overdone, it is true, and we can not always succeed with our experiments in the psychological laboratory; but the secret is there for him who dares attempt the reaction.

It is more blessed to give than to receive, we are told, and he who takes his fill of this rare joy must not find fault if his gifts sometimes are forgotten. Too much giving defeats remembrance, that is the effect of the mother's fostering care; when we give overmuch we do but create an atmosphere of kindness and consideration, a monotonous temperature of love that does not pique and kindle the emotions, but keeps

the coals of friendship at the smoldering point. Our friend's memory is apt to become jaded by our very excess, and then he is at the mercy of the first little, solitary gift from another, which makes its own appeal the more insistently from the contrast with our own generosity. The one thing is treasured ardently, and all the rest accepted as a matter of course. The multiplicity of gifts deadens the sense of relationship; the things themselves are no longer hypnotically suggestive. Of course this can not rob them of their altruistic quality, but the lover loses on the investment.

And so, as there is an art in giving, there should be a metaphysic as well, to counteract the effect of mere accumulations. If one's gifts are consistently original and individual, they may, by this quality, defeat the cloying effect of quantity. Such gifts should point all to one purpose, like Cupid's little arrows, flying in different directions, all aimed at the same heart. The goal is secret, a mysterious truth, undefinable, perhaps; but the object should be felt, even if not understood.

This unity of aim should correlate all one's gift-giving. Happy is he of whom it can be said, "Why hasn't he given me this? It would be so like him!" or, "No one could possibly have given me this but he,

for it is himself!" Some presents must, of course, be given altruistically from the sheer delight of giving unselfishly, to satisfy a felt want, and with no ulterior motive; but these will not matter if the main trend of one's giving be toward that end,—the creating in our friend's mind of an image of us that will endure, an image toward which each gift has an adjuvant and a cumulative meaning, all pointing to the ideal of our friendship.

And so, in this game of love, we try to kill two birds with one stone. This is the true economy of friendship and of mutual happiness. There is room enough besides for self-sacrifice, for unrequited devotion, for unrewarded service,—we do all that gladly. But may we not, if we can, be happy too in being remembered? We must, willy-nilly, build our own little egoistic altar, praise-bedecked. The circle of selfishness has often been traced through the emotions, and one can prove any renunciation, any sacrifice, to be due to motives concerned with our own pleasure. Love, of all emotions, is most complex; it baffles analysis. In its highest form is it most selfish or unselfish? Is service or happiness its greatest reward? No one can tell.

We know, too, that "not to be doing, but to be"

wins love, wherefore such games as giving of gifts seem futile and of no avail to preserve remembrance. But none the less, if we love we must give, and, giving, is it not best to give with thought, with meaning, and with purpose, that best gift of all—ourselves?

THE DECORATIVE VIRTUE

THERE is an old-time ring about the word "gallantry"; it has in it an echo of the days of chivalry and romance. One thinks of the ancient costume as well as custom—it goes with the adjective "arch" and with the verb "to bridle"—suggesting one of the lost arts of social amenity. It has a rich, medieval color that has faded out of life in these days of the matter-of-fact and the practical. Gallantry was, no doubt, the chief of those "parts" for which gentlemen were noted in the eighteenth century. We have few "gentlemen of parts" nowadays; men are content to be gentlemen unadorned by such extrinsic charm. For this particular quality emphasizes one of the few paradoxical cases in which the part is not included in the whole. Gallantry is a supplementary virtue. It is not one of the non-essentials, for it has, in its way, a decorative quality that distinguishes it from the sterner virtues. It is the feather upon the cap of gentleness. Only because in modern times gallantry became impossible without the gallant did this fine flower of

courtesy with its heavy-sweet perfume run down and become a weed.

The old school of manners has passed with its minuet, its palfrey and its love-locks and ribbons and laces. For these the new mode brings the two-step, the automobile and the khaki. Etiquette has been replaced by "form"—its rules smack more of the stable and the field than of the ballroom. The fundamental rules of good breeding survive, but they are, year by year, more laxly interpreted for the benefit of haste. We pay calls by telephone. We content ourselves with following the spirit, rather than the letter of the social law. What was characteristic of the old was its peace, its grace, its harmony. The newer style makes for contest and contrast and force. We have, in short, exchanged beauty for strength.

This change in deportment is exemplified every day in our modern, familiar method of getting acquainted. We do not, at first, exchange compliments, any more than we drop a curtesy or bend the knee. We do not kiss a proffered hand, we do not press our hearts theatrically—nor do we adopt the pleasant fragrant flatteries that went with such polished manners. Instead, we break the ice by means of some pretended jocose quarrel audaciously carried on according to the

new formulæ of accepted privilege. Our first meeting is usually carried on along humorous lines instead of upon the stately plane of the old noblesse. We, above all, do not take our partner too seriously; we jest, we laugh at her, we arraign her with joking persiflage, we seek the differences rather than the samenesses between us.

It is all good-humored enough, and all perfectly understood—it is quite an established system; it is but politeness seen from another angle. But, in its way, it is quite as false as the old method. For the fictitious praise we have substituted a fictitious dispraise. We seek to put each other at our ease by an assumed attack. It becomes a conversational tourney where the points are removed from our spears and the test of skill is to entertain as much as possible without inflicting a serious wound. But none the less it is a mock battle. Which is better, then, the unreal conflict or the unreal adoration? Each substitutes excitement for emotion.

Our modern manners are athletic; the old were esthetic. In their social relations our ancestors sought to give an atmosphere of beauty to life. We prefer the polo game and the hurdle race. They cultivated rather the *haute manège* wherein they could display

sensational grace and agility in the volt and demi-volt, the caracole, capriole, the curvet and the rest of the "raised airs" of classic horsemanship. This delight in the mere craft and technical excellence inevitably tended to produce an artificiality which went to its absurd extreme in the stilted manners of the French salons and in the exaggerated elegance of Euphuistic discourse. Gallantry became perfunctory, conventional; and with it the gallant became a mental figure as eccentric as his extraordinary costume. His politeness, his flattery, his witticisms were as unnatural as the titillations from his snuff. Conversation was showily barren—polite dialogue was like a string of imitation gems.

It is not strange, then, that with the reaction a puritanical bluntness seemed to be the only honest mode of speech, and that criticism took the place of compliment. As the cavalier's flowing locks were cut, bowl-shaped, so were the verbal flourishes trimmed down to a sturdier, healthier growth. Time passed—gallantry became a lost art, or an alien one, surviving only in the distrusted urbanity of the Latin races. Women who had before been managed by flattery now shied like timid colts at the first word of praise from

a stranger. They met compliment with indignation, and a tribute was an affront.

But we have come back, in our cyclic progress, to a higher and better view of the meaning and function of gallantry, and the word has crept again into our speech. It had long survived only in its martial sense, and, if we regard that interpretation of the term, we may perhaps discover its essential qualities. "Gallantry under fire." How the phrase stirs one! What is it, and where is its parallel in the petty conflicts of peace?

An Irish corporal, we will say, retreating with his disorganized company pursued by Zulus, sees his lieutenant fall, shot through the leg. To attempt to rescue him is almost certain death; to fall back to cover and save his ammunition would be perfectly justifiable. Yet he runs forward, picks up the officer and holds the enemy at bay till he has, after a terrible ordeal, brought the wounded man back to shelter and safety. This is gallantry under fire. It is worthy the Victoria Cross. In a single instant he has become famous "for valor."

But what of the soldier who, all day and all night and all day again, lies with his comrades in the rifle-

pit, swept by a hail of bullets from an unseen foe, scourged by heat, thirst, hunger and loss of blood? Surely his valor is as great. But it is not gallantry; it is duty well performed. One service is as worthy of praise as the other, but they are different things.

It should be easy to paraphrase this in terms of social relations. We may imagine a fictitious case: Miss Payson, returning with her lover, who has suffered an accident, to his rooms, that she may attend him till the doctor arrives, finds another woman, a stranger, her rival, waiting for him. The situation is compromising. Miss Payson would be justified in thinking the worst of the girl, and of treating her with mere politeness. But the very extremity of the girl's danger, her helplessness, inspires magnanimity, chivalry, some superlative of kindness in Miss Payson's soul. And so she leaps to her rescue, saying: "How glad I am that you were here, for unfortunately I can not stay. And I do hope that you will call on me soon and let me know how he is!" It is a bit of true gallantry.

Again, suppose another extraordinary chance of displaying the same noble trait. A girl at a restaurant, publicly abandoned, after a tiff, by her caddish escort, boldly comes over to Miss Payson's table and asks

protection. Her act is audacious, unjustified, even reproachable. But again she arouses, by her very desperation, a nobility above conventional dicta. "Do sit down with us," says Miss Payson; "we have been wishing all the evening that we might know you!" See how the abounding good measure of courtesy is pressed down and running over in gallantry! There's a superfluous ounce of blood in some persons that manifests itself in such extremes of sensitive sentiment. You may call this merely *noblesse oblige*, but if it goes no farther or deeper than that, it is spiritual nobility allied to a quickness of mental perception and adaptation that makes the act picturesque. Gallantry of such sort becomes the poetry of which kindness and honor are the prose versions. It is the apotheosis of Christian duty, a quixotic extension of the Golden Rule.

The old gallant sparkled; his gallantry, with its *bon mot* and its deftly turned flattery, shed a luster upon himself only. It was he who was the hero, the chief actor in the encounter. But, in this newer, finer gallantry it is the recipient of the complimentary action who is gilded by the tribute. The gift is altruistic. Such gallantry contains, always, a deference and a humility on the part of the performer that adds to

the worth of his deed. He is like the king who washes the feet of the beggars, for, though he loses none of his own nobility in so doing, he dignifies the object of his regard. There was little gallantry to King Cophetua's historic act, for he did but raise the beggar maid up to his own level. One to be gallant must voluntarily stand aside and put the other in the place of honor, and one must do it with grace. The old style gallantry was a test of mental alertness; this rarer form is a test of spiritual delicacy.

Yet, as in the case of the corporal who rescues his lieutenant, this social act must, to be gallant, to distinguish it from the mere duty of the situation, be attended by something of flourish. It must be dramatic, picturesque, poetic. It must come in a flash, like lightning, to cause both surprise, admiration and illumination.

We may define gallantry, then, as an unexpected and unnecessary rise to courtesy in a social emergency—a highly specialized form of politeness. Now, courtesy is latent in us all; no doubt it can, at least, be taught to any one who has a trace of social talent. But it takes something nobler and more poetic to add the charm and brilliancy which make true gallantry.

Mere presence of mind may rescue one with honor from a difficult situation, but to come out of it with gallantry, to turn the tables beautifully upon one's opponent, to cast the coals of fire upon his head with a pyrotechnic art, this requires social genius.

Our illustrations are, of course, extreme forms of gallantry—the quality is exhibited in many other ways and in varying degrees of histrionic value. It ranges from generosity to magnanimity, from unselfishness to renunciation, from the hostess who deliberately mispronounces a word that she may not shame her illiterate guest to that English admiral who destroyed his own surplus of ammunition because his enemy was ill-supplied. Essentially it is a complimentary action; there need be no word of praise spoken.

The practise of gallantry has never died out; its larger, better form has always stimulated those sensitive to such opportunities as it affords. But in its minor aspects it may almost be regarded as having died, to be revived in these latter days. It comes with the renaissance of the esthetic instinct in modern life, with the age of prosperity and leisure. It will become again the social game, a novel form of mental exercise, a petty cult, a free-masonry of the *Illuminati*.

One can see it on the increase already, and in its initial aspect it presents a humorous side. We, who have been using the racket and the cricket-bat, must learn the wand and the grace-hoops! We, who have only run and jumped, must perforce learn to fly! There will be a merry time coming, when the stock-broker takes up gallantry and practises his art upon the bediamonded dowager!

But there are some to whom it comes naturally enough—the connoisseurs in life, the devotees of mental grace; and, to encounter such a one, if one has not been trained to the art, often proves embarrassing. One suddenly wakes up to the fact that there are unexpected wonders possible in the commonplace. It is like finding jewels in the gutter.

There was a beautiful woman, once, who delighted in beauty in others and who often complained of the conventionalities which prevented her from giving her tribute to her fair sisters. One day she broke down this artificial barrier, and, upon the street, she stopped a young girl whose face she admired. “I want to tell you that you’re the prettiest girl I have seen to-day,” said the gallant one. To this gratuity the disconcerted maid could only, at first, stammer, “Why, the idea!” It was pathetic. She had no response at

hand for so surprising and unexpected a compliment. But that she was pleased was evident by the way she soon rallied to meet the emergency. She knew that she had been inadequate to the situation, that something was expected of her; and, inarticulate as she was, she did her best to prove worthy, groping blindly for the retort courteous. Finally she brought out, in a burst of gratitude, "Well, if you think *I'm* pretty, I can only say ditto!" The remark, equivocal as it was, was understood. She, too, had proved herself capable of gallantry. Perhaps never in her life before had she risen so high in the amenities.

Many women, however, are so unaccustomed to considering compliments as sincere that they meet them with an assumption of anger. "If you say things like that, I'll not talk to you!" is a common way of accepting praise. She might at least say, "You can hardly induce me to believe that," if she can not return the favor on the fly and have the grace to answer, "I'm delighted to know that you think so!"

For gallantry should challenge gallantry—no lesser mode of feeling can compete with it. It should put one on one's mettle and bring out the best one has of sympathy and appreciation. It should lubricate our human relations. How jarring most personal inter-

course seems, after one has come into contact with those who practise this delicate refinement, this pretty religion of ultra-courtesy! But one must be educated to this point of view—we are too used to the realism of the times. “Kiss me good-by!” said a wife, as her husband left her, one morning, to go to his business. “Why, I’ve kissed you once already!” he replied, and never noticed the bitter humor of his remark. He was not unkind, he was not lacking in affection, but in gallantry.

It is women who excel at this fine art. The gallantry of woman to woman is as characteristic of the sex as is her jealousy. It is not so applicable to literary exploitation, for it has never crystallized into the formula of a newspaper joke. Satire is always easier than appreciation, and so, while we have written much of woman’s weakness and inconsistency, woman’s gallantry has been left to the larger-minded novelists to describe. But this dramatic quality is one of the finest fruits of her restoration to mental equality. It has come with her first awakening to “class consciousness” and, in fine women, is already the sign of a perfected alliance offensive and defensive. The true type of modern woman is, in a finer sense than

the political one, the champion of her sex. The unprotected damsel in distress often finds succor first, not from the arrant knight, but from her chivalrous sister. The type of the woman of the day who assumes man's freedom and opportunity is not Made-moiselle de Maupin, but Jeanne d'Arc.

If you have ever seen your hostess select the least promising, the predestined wall-flower from her guests, bring her out into the center of the stage, throw the pink calcium upon her, show off her good points and keep her worst in the shadow with the cleverness of a professional photographer, make her the heroine of the company, and all with an exquisite sacrifice of her own importance, you have witnessed gallantry of a sort far more common among women than among men. Perhaps women are more facile because they have a talent for self-sacrifice.

From man to man such tributes are well-nigh impossible. Men show their mutual esteem mainly by jocular abuse. They fear sentiment, being unable to differentiate it from sentimentality. Nothing is so mortifying to them as to be discovered guilty of feeling. A man can rise to heights of nobility and magnanimity; he can, like the knights of romance, throw

away his shield if his opponent is unguarded, he can in his way be chivalrous, but gallantry from man to man is rare. The defeated suitor, for instance, seldom rises to the heights of courtesy toward his rival that is often attained by women defeated in love.

There was one, for instance, who, after having been jilted, presented to the second woman, the new love, a tintype of her lover taken as a babe—her dearest possession. Unnecessary, unexpected, dramatic, the act was one of pure gallantry. The conquered general may haul down his flag and present his sword to his enemy with grace, but he can not salute the victorious banner. So men in their social relations live up to their code of honor—women rise above all law.

In the relations between men and women gallantry is most picturesque, and it achieves its climax in courtship. Here it is inherent and essential; it is courtship. But in such a battle of flowers no man can rival a gallant woman, for this is *par excellence* the woman's field. Man's ineptitude in wooing is woman's immortal complaint of him. All his banter, his raillery, his whimsical pleasantries can not equal a single act of gallantry. The young girl admires chivalry in men and prefers it, on the whole, to strength or wisdom.

It is not merely a selfish longing, for it is the worship of an abstract principle, it is the attitude of gallantry in itself she worships; and she delights in the tribute whether it is paid to herself or another. In a word, she craves the poetry of life. For women, artists in social affairs, never lose their sight of the ideal, however impossible it may be to find it realized. Their interest lies in the potential, not the dynamic power of the moment. The present, for them, always holds romance, for it holds the possibility of emotional adventure. And of this gallantry is the outward and visible sign.

It is, perhaps, because we have become used to regarding the beautiful as a luxury rather than as a necessity that gallantry, nowadays, excites surprise. The ancient costumes, weapons, tools and architecture all were beautiful, and one was familiar with the esthetic atmosphere. We think now only of objects of art as beautiful, and, in the same way, in the give and take of our every-day life, we do not expect to minister to any higher sense than that of honesty. We trust the plain uncolored version of the drama of the commonplace and the decorative virtues are regarded suspiciously. It is a pity, for it is surely as interesting to meet the stranger with the doffed cap as with the

clasped fist. One has only to try it—to enter, even if experimentally, into this charming relation with the first newcomer to discover a vivid experience well worth tasting. The game of kindness can be made as thrilling as the game of mutual depreciation, for, when you play it aright, cooperation is as exciting as competition.

THE END

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